

## **How dare she?**

*A critical discourse analysis of Greta Thunberg*

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# Foreword

To be able to thoroughly explore on subject over a year has been a great experience and confirmed that I would like to continue on this path. This experience has been motivating, inspiring, and I have enjoyed it since the beginning.

I have of course many people I would like to thank for having such a great time with this thesis. My family and friends who have always been there when I needed someone to call and share the ups and downs with. A special thank you to Stig, Linda, Anna and Tonje for making my social academic experience unforgettable. I have enjoyed every discussion, laugh, smell of coffee and existential crisis. I want to thank the faculty for sending me to the Sociology Winter seminar, which was a huge inspiration, and for giving me opportunities and trusting me when I said I could contribute. I want to thank Anne Ryen for being a constant motivator and giving me inspiration, opportunities, and a friendship, and my supervisor Alexander Ruser for his feedback, tips and believing in me and this thesis. I hope our collaborations does not end with the final words of this thesis.

And finally, I want to thank Greta Thunberg. Not only for being the study-object in my thesis, but for changing the perception of what a person can and cannot do and being the voice of sustainability.

I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I enjoyed writing it.

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# Abstract

This thesis focuses on climate communication and analyses Greta Thunberg's speeches on climate change. The research concludes that it is the combination of the frames she uses, her rhetorical appeals and who she is that plays a key role in understanding her remarkable success of mobilizing people across the globe. The research identifies five discursive frames. These are the 'moral prophet frame', 'generational justice frame', 'power shift frame', 'empty rhetoric frame' and 'scientific frame'. These frames indicate which imaginaries she believes in and appeals to. Climate imaginaries are common understandings, a prioritization of cultural and environmental values and implies a mode of organizing production and consumption. She criticizes the 'fossil fuels forever'-imaginary and the 'techno-market'-imaginary. She presents believes in line with the 'climate apocalypse'-imaginary and is mostly in line with the 'sustainable lifestyle'-imaginary by wanting a system change from capitalism and consumerism to a greener economic order which focuses on equity and sustainability. This is especially evident in the moral prophet frame, generational justice frame and the power shift frame. Who she is and her popularity can be connected to the ideal type of a charismatic leader and rhetorical appeals. Even though the climate science is clear, many want to avoid the topic of climate change. Mental barriers to avoid acknowledging and doubting climate change are presented and connected to the frames and imaginaries. Thunberg does not tackle many of these barriers and goes against many recommendations on how to frame climate change.

Greta Thunberg has shown that you are never too small to make a difference and has gained political power both by what she says and the movement Fridays For Future. This research can contribute with knowledge on Thunberg specifically, and climate communication in general.

**Keywords:** Greta Thunberg, climate change, school strike, climate frames, imaginaries, charismatic leadership, rhetorical appeals, environmental sociology

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## 1.0. Introduction - This is a crisis

*One day, a terrible fire broke out in a forest. All the animals were frightened and fled. They stopped by a stream and watched the fire destroy their homes. They all felt powerless. One little hummingbird swooped into the stream and picket up a few drops of water, flew into the forest and put them on the fire. The hummingbird went back to the stream and did the same thing over and over again. All the other animals watched in disbelief, and some tried to discourage it by saying “you are too little, your beak is too tiny, there is no point, it’s only a drop, you can’t put out this fire”. When one of the animals asked in a mocking voice “What do you think you are doing?” The hummingbird answered without wasting time or losing a beat: “I am doing what I can” (The Story of the Hummingbird, written by my memory).*

Greta Thunberg reminds me of this hummingbird. She sat outside the Swedish Parliament alone as a fifteen-year-old. Like the hummingbird she was taking on a fight that seemed impossible. Suddenly, she was heard, she got a platform, and more people across the globe joined her in her fight for the climate. What is she saying that has managed to get the attention?

The climate psychologist Per Espen Stoknes claims that the biggest science-communication-fiasco in history might be the fact that the more certain and serious climate science get, the less worried the society becomes. During more than the last three decades, scientists, advocates and others have tried to reach out with facts on climate change. Climate scientific facts are constantly better documented, more threatening and alarming. At the same time, more and more people are either not worried, or do not act based on these facts (Stoknes, 2017). There is a broad agreement that the state of the climate and nature is deeply worrisome. The variation on the matter is in the way it is communicated, rather than the understanding of the underlying seriousness (Hessen, 2020: 21). Knowledge on communication can play a vital role to reduce climate change (Arnslett, Bjørnæs, & Lannoo, 2018). Since the fall of 2018, there has been a massive growth in young engagement for the climate. Much thanks to Greta Thunberg who inspired thousands of school children across the world to school strike with “Fridays for future” (Aadland, 2019). If many have tried before her, can it be something special about what she is saying and who she is? To understand this, I am doing a critical discourse analyses of Thunberg’s speeches with the following research question:

**How does Greta Thunberg frame the climate crisis in her speeches?**

## 1.1. Aim and refinements

The topic of this thesis is climate communication, and Thunberg is the subject of research since she has given the climate debate a lot of attention by her remarkable ability to engage people in climate strikes across the globe. Her success might be rooted in *what* she is saying, *how* she is framing and legitimizing it and *who* she is.

I want to explore Thunberg's message by identifying the different frames she uses, which will indicate which imaginary she believes in and appeals to. Imaginaries are a common understanding and meaning amongst people which is the base for common practices and have a broad shared sense of legitimacy. Frames are the expression of these imaginaries. I present mental barriers which works as self-defence mechanism when people want to avoid talking about the climate crisis to investigate if Thunberg goes against these barriers in her speeches. I look into qualities of the ideal type of a charismatic leader to get a better understanding of who she is and qualities that can have managed to engage and mobilize people. I will also explore rhetorical appeals to get an understanding of how she is trying to convince, and what appeals she might have. This research aims to increase the understanding of Thunberg's success specifically and contribute with knowledge on how to communicate climate change in general.

This research does not analyze the general discourse analysis of climate change since this has already been done (see e.g. Stoknes, 2017) which will be presented in chapter 3. I will not look at the criticism of her, if her arguments are valid, her body language, tone etc. The reason for this is both due to the number of findings only in what she is saying, and due to the size of the thesis. Sometimes it will be relevant to mention her tone, some criticism she has gotten and how she appears to give depth to the analysis. However, what she is saying has been given a lot of attention and can give us tools to communicate the climate crisis and is therefore the focus in this research.

I follow her on social media and have been invested in her for quite some time, regardless of this thesis. I am aware that I am biased and see this as a strength. The general starting point of a text analysis is the researcher's interest (see e.g. Østbye, Helland, Knapskog, & Larsen, 2013: 66), and I would not write about this if I were not interested. Further aspects of the research quality will be discussed in chapter 4.3. In the following, central definitions, who Greta Thunberg is and Fridays for future will be presented before this chapter ends with a presentation of the structure of this thesis. The presentation of her speeches will be in the analysis since that is the research material.

## 1.2. Definitions

Some of the central concepts from the special report on 1,5 degrees will be presented, since Thunberg uses these in her speeches, and some terms are used when presenting context and theory in this thesis.

**Global warming** describes the increase in the global average temperature in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. **Climate** is the average weather over a 30-year period. Over several decades, human made emissions of greenhouse gases such as CO<sub>2</sub> and changes in natural carbon storages through deforestation has led to climate changes due to temperature rise and changed rain patterns. **Climate change** is the changes in temperature, rain, ocean rise levels and wind. Global warming has already an impact on the climate and natural systems. The atmosphere and oceans are warmer, snow and ice have melted, the rain patterns have changed, the ocean level has risen, heatwaves have increased, there is less ocean ice in the Arctic and the permafrost temperature has risen. **The consequences of climate change** are how they affect life, health, livelihoods, ecosystems, species, economic -, social -, and cultural values, services included eco system services and infrastructure. **Net emissions** mean that the absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> is drawn from the human made CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. How fast CO<sub>2</sub> is released determines how many years remains until the emissions must become “net zero”. **Net zero emissions** is achieved when there is a balance between greenhouse gas emissions and the absorption of emissions. **Carbon budget** is a limitation of emissions of net CO<sub>2</sub> to reach global warming to 1,5 degrees. CO<sub>2</sub> stays in the atmosphere several hundreds of years after it is released and the natural absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> through the carbon cycle in oceans and on land is slow. This means that the cumulative net CO<sub>2</sub> emissions leads to an increased CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere, and therefore a temperature rise. **Technologies for negative emission** are technologies that removes CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and will be necessary in addition to cutting greenhouse gas emissions. **Carbon capture and carbon storage** is the process where CO<sub>2</sub> is captured and then stored in geological formations underground. This technology is used today, but not developed in big scale. Even with the use of technologies for negative emissions, emission reduction will be needed for e.g. methane (Miljødirektoratet, 2018a).

### 1.3. Who is Greta Thunberg?

As will be described in the analysis, she is a part of her message. Therefore, it is important to understand who she is. She is a climate activist from Sweden who became internationally known for her school strikes for climate. She was 15 years old when she started her strike in August 2018 in front of the Swedish Parliament. Her homemade sign is with her on her travels, and it says “Skolstrejk för klimatet” (School strike for the climate) with painted black letters on a white background. Fridays For Future is a school strike movement inspired by her strikes (Garvik & Tjernshaugen, 2019).

She is the oldest daughter of two, her mother is a famous singer and her father is an actor. When she was around 8-9 years old, she learned that flying was bad for the climate, yet people continued to fly. She does not like it when people say one thing and do something else (Skavlan, 2019a). She started to learn more and could not look away anymore. She thought that she should do what she could, even though it was very little (TheEllenShow, 2019). When she was around 11 years old, she fell into depression (TEDx Talks, 2018). She stopped going to school, did not eat nor speak. She felt like there was no point in living, since no one cared about climate change (Skavlan, 2019b). She was later diagnosed with OCD, Asperger syndrome and selective mutism which means that she only speaks when she think it’s necessary – “now is one of those moments” she has said when speaking of why she started to strike (TEDx Talks, 2018). Thunberg does not fly, she is vegan and she only buys things when it is absolutely necessary (Skavlan, 2019a). She made her parents stop flying across the world, her mother had to change carrier since it demanded that she was flying. Her parents try to hide it if they shop. She claims she can see if they lie. Then they must admit it and she yell at them. She even goes through the receipts, she says in a humorous tone (Skavlan, 2019a). In May 2018 she entered a writing competition about the environment, and it got published. She was contacted by many, including Bo Thorén who had started a group with people who wanted to do something about the climate crisis. Thunberg liked the idea of a school strike, inspired by the Parkland students. However, the others wanted something different, so she continued alone. Her parents did not like the idea and did not support it. August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018, at 15 years old she sat outside the Swedish Parliament and handed out flyers with facts on the climate crisis and why she was striking. She posted what she was doing on Twitter and Instagram (Greta Thunberg Sweden, 2019), her mother with around 40.000 followers shared it, the media came, and soon it went viral (Espeland, 2020b).



Asperger's syndrome makes her see the world in a different way (Skavlan, 2019a) and she thinks it is a gift (Greta Thunberg Sweden, 2019), a strength and a superpower (TEDx Talks, 2018). She says that it makes her see things in black or white, she is not good at lying and is not enjoying participating in social games such as social interactions (TEDx Talks, 2018). She would not have done what she has if it were not for her diagnosis, since if she were 'normal' and social she would have organized herself in an organization or started one. She started to school strike alone instead (Greta Thunberg Sweden, 2019). In a crisis like this, she claims that we need people who think differently, who thinks outside the box (TheEllenShow, 2019). She saw everything from the outside, and she saw that this was wrong. She realized that she could try to make a different and try to make the world a better place (Skavlan, 2019b).

Fridays For Future is a movement of school strikers inspired by Greta Thunberg's school strike (FridaysForFuture, 2019a). The participants in the movement define themselves as the voiceless future of humanity. They are deeply concerned about their future and they criticize the politicians for not listening to them nor taking the climate crisis seriously. They are rising up, demanding justice for all past, present and future victims of the climate crisis. They see the climate crisis as the biggest threat in human history and do not accept the inaction of the decision-makers of the world. They want the ones in power to take responsibility, and solve the climate crisis (FridaysForFuture, 2019e).

She sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in the fall of 2019, which gained a lot of publicity. She has also won several awards (see e.g. Garvik & Tjernshaugen, 2019; Amnesty International, 2019) including the Nordic Council environmental award, but she refused to accept it, saying that the climate movement does not need awards, they need the people in charge to start listening to science instead (The Guardian, 2019a). She was named the person of the year 2019 by Time magazine and lexicographers at Collins Dictionary named 'climate strike' the word of the year (The Guardian, 2019b). She says that the most important thing she does is communicate and put pressure on the ones in power (TheEllenShow, 2019). She never expected the movement to get this big (TheEllenShow, 2019), yet, she is afraid that even though the movement is big, it might not lead to anything. But she should do what she can, for as long as she can and hope that it leads to something (Skavlan, 2019b). Thunberg has joined strikes in many countries in Europe and North America and has spoken at summits, including at the UN and the World Economic Forum (Garvik & Tjernshaugen, 2019). She wants to go back to school, but will continue striking until the Sweden acts according to the Paris Agreement (Skavlan, 2019b).

Her climate commitment has made her controversial, and many have criticized and harassed her. Some claim that she is just a pawn, that she gets paid for what she does, that her parents are using her, that her English is too good, and that her speeches are too complicated for someone her age (see e.g. Espeland, 2020b, 2020c; Dahlback, Karlsen, Dolonen, & Bergsaker, 2019). Thunberg is not surprised that she gets so much hate since most people are not aware of the climate crisis, and therefore a school strike might seem odd. She is not part of an organization, but she sometimes supports or collaborate with NGOs who work for climate and the environment. She has not received financial benefits or promises of money in the future, neither has her family or anyone connected to her. She is doing everything independent and is only representing herself. This is 'off course' the way it is going to continue. The idea of fighting for the climate for money is absurd she claims. She writes her own speeches but does get help from some scientists on how to express certain complicated causes. She wants to say correct things so that she does not spread incorrect information, or things that can be misunderstood (Greta Thunberg Sweden, 2019).

She travels with her father, but she does not think that her father wants to travel with her. However, it is his duty she says humorously. She is not old enough to travel alone, but her father is the child at home. She must make sure he cleans up etc. (Skavlan, 2019b). As previously mentioned, she made her parents stop flying and shopping, and she looks for receipts to see if they are lying. This aspect of her as a child being the 'adult' will be important in the analysis, especially in the Power shift frame. This can be connected to her being Swedish. Astrid Lindgren who wrote Pippi Longstocking was inspired by Ellen Keys' philosophy which focused on growing up free from adult dominance. The Swedish politician Olof Palme spoke up against the US and Soviet, and during this time, the cartoon Bamse was created, and many saw the 'world's strongest bear' as a child friendly pedagogical version of Palme, always ready to defend the weak and formulating sustainable tools for how life should be lived. Bamse is therefore the embodiment of the Swedish values (Periskop, 2020). The voice of Bamse was actually Greta Thunberg's grandfather (Espeland, 2020c). There was a political culture in Sweden where one could tell the world how it should behave, formulated by Palme, and sustained since then. Thunberg is standing on the shoulders of Pippi and Bamse. A competent child with superpowers, speaking up against the powerful (Periskop, 2020). Sweden is also seen as a pioneer country when it comes to Education in Sustainable development (Straume, 2016) which will be explained further in chapter 2.2. when presenting Agenda 21.

## 1.4. Structure of the thesis

The titles of the chapters are phrases she uses in her speeches which suits the content of the chapter. In “Theory – ours house is on fire, a sociologist to the rescue” I added the last part, since I argue how sociology and social science can contribute.

Greta Thunberg and her movement did not happen in a vacuum. To understand this, the historical development, perspectives on sustainability and sustainability as a political issue with some of the most important reports, goals and agreements will be explored in chapter 2. “Context – business as usual and empty words”. In chapter 3. “Theory – our house is on fire, a sociologist to the rescue” I present how social science can contribute, since climate science have often been dominated by natural scientists. This chapter also includes theory on imaginaries, climate change frames, mental climate barriers and charismatic leadership. In chapter 4. “Method – our eyes are upon you”, critical discourse analysis, rhetorical appeals research quality and the approach and sample are presented. Theory and method are intertwined in discourse analysis, which will be discussed briefly in this chapter. In chapter 5. “Analysis – how dare you!” I present the five frames identified in this research and connect these with the imaginaries, mental barriers, rhetorical appeal and charismatic leadership before this thesis ends with chapter 6. “Discussion – I want you to panic” where I present the main findings, how this thesis can be used, and suggestions on further research. First, a presentation of the context of ecological sustainability.

## 2.0. Context – Empty words and business as usual

“Climate crisis” and “ecological collapse” are frequently on the agenda. Both politically and in everyday conversation (Hessen, 2020: 12). Between 2013 and 2018 the word climate crisis (‘klimakrise’) was used 450 times a year in the Norwegian news, and in 2018 it was used ten times more (Espeland, 2020a) and climate was at the top of the list of what the people thought was the most important political cases in Norway (NTB, 2019). Those with the most knowledge on climate change, are more worried (Lannoo & Reed, 2016). That humans are changing their environment, is not something new. Climate change does not have any geographical boundaries, and we can read about climate change across the world in the media (see e.g. Elster, 2019; IFRC, 2019; Newburger, 2019). Even though most politicians do not seem too eager to focus on sustainability, more and more voices have risen to show their discontent with the lack of sustainable focus. Such as Greta Thunberg, other activists, organizations and even lawsuit against the Norwegian state (Knežević & Fjeld, 2019). However, the history suggests that getting things done has been difficult, even though there has not been a lack of agreements. The context of sustainability as a political issue, different perspectives on sustainability and some reports and agreements will be presented in this chapter to understand the context Thunberg started in. One of her main critiques is the inaction of politicians and their ‘empty words’, such as agreeing on the Paris Agreement but not doing what is necessary to reach the goals. This chapter will give a deeper understanding of her critiques in the analysis and the context where Thunberg started her activism.

### 2.1. Perspectives on sustainability

Already in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became clear that the industrializing had negative effects. The problems were seen as local problems, and the solutions they suggested, was local solutions. E.g. poor housing and poor air quality were town problems, not problems for the state or international associations. The exploitation of natural resources was not seen as something bad; it was obvious that coal and ore should be extracted. It was not until after WW2 that environment focus increased. The atom bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki showed us that environmental problems can spread in time and space. Radioactive radiation can give genetic changes that affects future generations, or radioactive particles can be spread by the wind over long distances. This led to international agreements to limit the spread of radioactivity, and the atmosphere was seen as something common. The modern environmental movements beginning has been dated to the book “Silent Spring” from 1962 by Rachel Carson.

Processes that previously were seen as harmless and useful turned out to have serious consequences. She described how pollutants that were meant to kill insect pests found its way up the food chain. Everywhere, environmental problems and environmentally harmful substances were found in the air, water, and soil. International rules were set to stop the dumping of waste at sea, and big emissions from ships (Lidskog, Blomgren, & Sundqvist, 2013:14-16). Through the 60's and 70's, people got more and more aware that humankind had created enormous scientific and civilizational progress, but that this had happened at the expense of the natural resources for human society. Capitalism was the bad guy, and therefore the environmental movement was closely connected to the criticism of the capitalists in the first decades. The ecological critique was incorporated in the legitimation processes of capitalism, rather than being a global external critic of the economic system. The ecological critique had a totalization aspect, but it was slowly transformed into a more internal and relative critique that was more about companies and individuals who did not behave properly (Bjerre, 2019).

The critique of capitalism in the 60's and 70's resulted in an increased individualization that reinforced the focus on the actions of individuals and weakened the focus on the systematic and structural background for development. One related example is the finance crisis of 2008, where personal greed was the explanation, and not a crisis within capitalism itself. The political consumers gradually grew and expressed their discontent with non-sustainable forms of productions and chemical use. This led to eco labelling of goods among other things. The critique went from having a class-potential, to being individualized. It was now an individual responsibility to make demands to products and services. This way, the environmental movement soon became less political, and more individualized. Individual lifestyle replaced the political mass movement. The critique targeted the subjective violence (an identifiable agent), and not objective violence (systematic and structural). Since 1999 the concerns of the livelihoods on earth goes back to the explicit background of ecological critique and how capitalism cannot guarantee human future. The global climate change has probably brought back the totalization tendency in ecological critique. It is no longer about the consumer demanding fish with no heavy metals, or species that is not endangered. The question is if there will be any fish left in the oceans in 40-50 years (Bjerre, 2019).

While some claim that modernization and production are the cause of climate change (Beck, Nielsen, & Eriksen, 1997), others points out that economic growth and ecological considerations do not necessarily exclude each other. This can be due to the increased awareness has resulted in a more internalized ecological responsibility.

Environmental considerations are now seen as a main direction for continued growth, and not as a threat to economic development in ecological modernization (Lidskog et al., 2013).

Risks and dangers that are produced today are irreversible. The globalization has led to global threats that is international and not class specific. Wealth production and risk production are closely connected in the modern capitalistic society. The risks can mean destruction of life as consequences of climate change. Risk distribution and risk increase leads to social threats that normally affect lower classes first. Wealth wins over risk, because wealth is observable, and risk is non-observable. We might be facing a scapegoat-society where the ones who points out the reason to the threat, is the one causing people to get upset, not the threats in itself (Beck et al., 1997). Attacking the accuser is a strategy to restore image or limit the feeling of responsibility, by for example trying to reduce the credibility of the accuser (Benoit, 1997: 179). This is a defense mechanism, to avoid feeling guilty. More of such strategies, or mental barriers, will be presented in chapter 3, and applied in the analysis.

In many cases, one does not wish to stop destruction but find out how much destruction can be accepted. This normalizes destruction. One approves and legitimizes the amount of destruction 'necessary', often with economical goals trumping ecological priorities. These kind of value limits are an authorization for destruction if one keeps inside the limits of what is allowed (Beck et al., 1997:82). This was the case of the fires in the Amazonian rainforest. The Brazilian president allowed huge amounts of deforestation which led to weeks of uncontrollable forest fires (Carlsen, 2019) . When there are no concrete numbers of how much rainforest is necessary for survival, the limits can be pushed further and further. This is off course not only the case of Brazil. We can also see this in for example the mine dumping in Repparfjord in Norway (See e.g. Hægeland, Nordvåg, Hykkerud, Klo, & Martinsen, 2019). The limits are symbolically calming and gives a signal that someone is watching, while it in reality is a gigantic and permanent experiment. A lot of environmental policy is calming down symptoms, not fixing the problem. This strategy will become twice as ineffective since it is neither ecological nor economic in the long run. The reason for the environmental policy is symptom calming is because it came after the production processes (Beck et al., 1997).

Political affiliation to a certain degree goes hand in hand with the voter's' engagement and knowledge on climate questions. Many are aware of the connections between emissions and climate, most of us are not interested in reducing our own emissions.

Values are driving forces behind people's engagement on specific issues. Those with less individualistic values are more likely to care about climate changes, and those with the most knowledge on climate change, are the most worried (Lannoo & Reed, 2016). Even though there has been an increasing green movement politics across Europe with more focus on sustainability, there has been an even stronger wave of right-wing parties getting power, with e.g. Trump and Brexit (Ervik, 2019). In an individualized country such as Norway, free choice is important to many. Many claims that people should eat what they want, and not being 'forced' to make environmentally friendly choices (see e.g. Teigen & Lorvik, 2019; Baisotti, Andersen, & Dyrnesli, 2019). The political solution to the climate crisis is often about coordination, regulations and state involvement, which is usually more popular on the left side of the political spectrum (Arnslett et al., 2018:4). Words like equality, poor, rich and unity, or political terms that imply quick and radical changes such as capitalism and revolution, or moral admonitions such as greed, and lack of empathy and compassion are associated with the left side of the political spectrum. These are often in conflict with the values on the right side. Messages on a threatening world with instability and destruction contradicts the conservative values of status quo and avoiding negativity. The traditional climate solutions that increases state control fits poorly with the centrum right values regarding freedom and 'enjoying life'. For those, a message on conservative values such as responsibility, tradition, patriotism and possibilities works better (Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 23). Science and climate systems are complex, strong interests are involved and there is disagreement on which values are more important. This leads to a debate with contradicted information on the seriousness of the matter, uncertainties and the effects on individuals, society and politics. It can be hard for people to navigate through the conflicting information and finding someone to trust (Arnslett et al., 2018). With internet and social media, it is easier to seek out, or "cherry pick" the information we like. Many are worried that we are entering a post-truth era, due to the enormous attention to fake news and alternative facts. Twitter has become important to some politicians where everyone can say their opinion, and politics can turn into something ugly with the tools of social media platforms. Twitter might have been a part of the dissolution of the modern fact. We can be in an era where echo chambers, the power to direct attention, fake news plays an important political role (Sismondo, 2017). When science can be defined as 'fake', it can be easier to make unsustainable choices, and rather choose other sources if science and opinion are being equated. How people are using mental barriers to avoid talking about climate change or avoiding taking actions will be presented in chapter 3.2.

Ecosystems are being exploited with profit as the main goal, and capitalism can contribute to put pressure on ecosystems. The political spectrum is getting more polarized, and there has been a shift into a focus on individual freedom which includes not getting told what to do by the state or any international agreements or organizations. Placing observable short-term economic goals in front of non-observable sustainable long-term goals might be one of the reasons why it has been so hard to reach the international agreements regarding climate change. Some important international reports, goals, and agreements will be presented in the following to give a historical background of climate policies.

## 2.2. Reports, goals, and agreements

People used to think that the earth was endless. Then, people became more and more aware that even though we have had an immense technological development, the resources are not endless. The challenges are not local, and the impact we have on others are greater than first imagined. During the last decades, there have been many attempts to create understanding, agreements, and goals for countries to reduce the environmental destruction. 1972 is often seen as the starting point of the international environmental policy. This was the first year the United Nations (UN) arranged a worldwide conference with focus on the environment: United Nations Conference on the Human environment (UNCHE). The background of this conference was the debate between scientists, politicians and activists that claimed that the society was on the wrong track and was creating a dangerous path (Lidskog et al., 2013:16). The same year, the report 'Limits to Growth' by The Club of Rome was presented (The Club of Rome, 2019), which looked at how growth was threatening the earth's sustainability, and the world would collapse if it continued. Even though many had different views on the debate, the main consensus was that this was a threat to the world, not just some countries. They concluded that more than technology was needed to save humans and the planet. Changes in the design of society, lifestyles and values of the people was necessary, and international agreements and global actions were seen as the solution. United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) was established, but the most important outcome of the report might be that environmental questions were seen as global problems that demanded international solutions (Lidskog et al., 2013:16).

How people thought about the environment changed after the Brundtland commission came out with their report "Our Common Future" in 1987. The main message was that the world's society had to change and do what was required to ensure that the needs of today are met, without compromising the basis for future generations to meet their needs.



Having climate on the political agenda was new and the term sustainable development was introduced (Reuterdahl, 2012).

Five years later, the world's first climate conference was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This is also called earth summit or United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). UNCED's most important assignment was to create an action plan for the environment and development of the earth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This plan is called Agenda 21, which also was supplemented with Local Agenda 21, which is a more concrete document. The UN was for the first time asking the local communities to take responsibility (Olerud, 2016b). In Sweden where Thunberg is from, they have had a broader definition of sustainability than e.g. Norway. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Sweden has included all levels of the educational system. Sweden created a national Agenda 21 early, which made the implementation of ESD easier. Agenda 21 was quickly implemented on a national level in Sweden with a strategy and several national and municipal measures, including in the schools. Sweden is seen as a pioneer country when it comes to ESD, even though many scientists think that it is too slow (Straume, 2016). Swedish schools have also had a broader more systematic perspective than only the nature scientific aspects of sustainable development (Östman & Östman, 2013). Even though Thunberg was home-schooled on tour with her family due to her mother's opera-career, and was home-schooled when she was depressed, she did attend school for many years as well (Espeland, 2020a). I also assume that ESD was a part of her home-schooling since it has been implemented in the Swedish educational system for many years. It is therefore fair to assume that her schooling included a broad definition of sustainability including all aspects of sustainable development. This information is important to understand the background and the country specific context of Sweden and Thunberg. The rest of this chapter will be on the reports.

In 1995 the first Conference of the Parties (COP) was held. There has been a yearly COP meeting for the parts involved since (Olerud & Kallbekken, 2019). Thunberg spoke at COP 24 and COP 25, so these will be presented more detailed in the end of this chapter. The Kyoto protocol from 1997 is an international climate policy agreement with emission reduction commitments. USA and Australia have resigned, and some countries' emissions have increased since the agreement. The Kyoto protocol has been criticized, since countries can have Emission Trading, and it opens up for Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism which are making it possible for countries to rise their own emissions, if they invest, trade or collaborate with other countries on green projects (Olerud, 2016a).

In 2014 the New York Declaration on Forests was adopted which aims to end deforestation and restore forestlands. The progress has not lived up to its goals (Forestdeclaration, 2019). The UN millennium development goals were social and political development goals from 2000 – 2015, but none of the goals were completely fulfilled (Nordahl, 2015). After this, UN created 17 sustainability goals. This is the world's common work plan to exterminate poverty, fight inequality and stop the climate change by 2030 (FN-Sambandet, 2019) and it looks at social relations, economy and climate in context (Roberts, 2016). The agreements, conferences, goals, and the lack of achieving the commitments, are all important to understand the history of climate policy globally. However, there is one report and one agreement that is more important for this research. In the following, the Paris Agreement, and the IPCC special report on 1,5 degrees will be presented. Thunberg sat outside the Swedish Parliament to make them act according to the Paris Agreement and often refers to this agreement in her speeches, and the science in the IPCC report.

#### [Paris agreement and IPCC report on 1,5 degrees](#)

The Paris Agreement from 2015 is a legally binding agreement and its purpose is to fulfill the goals of the climate convention by strengthening the global response to the climate threat. This agreement can be characterized as the first legally binding climate agreement that is fostering global participation and commitments to all parties. It has three main goals: (i) To reduce global warming to well under 2 degrees Celsius, but preferably to 1,5 degrees Celsius in comparison to pre-industrial times. (ii) To increase countries' capacity to adapt to the climate changes and achieve a development that fosters climate resilience and low emissions. (iii) Global financial flows must be made compatible with low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-robust development. All countries involved are committed to create national emission goals. However, there are no penalties or sanctions for countries that do not fulfill the goals. In 2017 President Trump of the US announced that he is going to withdraw the US from the agreement (Jakobsen & Kallbekken, 2019). When the countries signed the Paris Agreement in 2015, they also decided that a special report on 1.5 degrees should be produced by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). IPCC collects scientific literature for decision makers on climate change, risks, effects and different adaptations and measures. The reports are relevant for policy making but does not dictate a certain policy. The reports are written by several hundreds of the leading experts across the world. Before the reports are published, they go through many editing rounds. This secures that they are objective, produced in an open and transparent way and covers as much as possible. Several hundreds of experts contribute to evaluate the reports, so that all viewpoints in the scientific environment are presented.

Several thousand other experts contribute to evaluate the reports (Miljødirektoratet, 2018a). The special report on 1,5 degrees was published on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018, a couple of months after Thunberg first sat outside the Swedish Parliament. It was made by the IPCC to evaluate the consequences of temperature measurements and how they can be achieved. It is based on over 6000 sources from scientific research. The report evaluates three main topics: (i) what we must do to limit the temperature rise to 1,5 degrees Celsius, (ii) what effects a temperature rise on 1,5 degrees would have compared to 2 degrees and (iii) how we can strengthen the global response and get possible measures for climate adaptation and emission reduction (Miljødirektoratet, 2018a). To avoid a temperature rise over 1,5 degrees, the greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced significantly. They present the remaining carbon budget for 1,5 degrees and 2 degrees and concludes that quick and deep system changes must be established in most sectors within the next one or two decades. It further describes how global warming of 1,5 degrees rise or higher will affect oceans, ice and the consequences for health, livelihoods, food and water supply, human safety, infrastructure and economic growth compared with today, and compared to a 2-degree warming. It explains how some will be harder affected, and how a rise over 1,5 degrees can have irreversible effects on ecosystems and species. They also conclude that the ambitions from the Paris Agreement is not enough to meet a goal of staying below 1,5, degrees. If we go through with the national determined contributions, the global warming will probably reach 3 degrees in 2100. It describes how much the global emissions must be reduced and the consequences if we do not. There is a need of an international collaboration and management of the institutional capacity of national and regional governments to introduce a climate policy that succeeds in limiting the global warming to 1,5 degrees and implement climate adaptation (Miljødirektoratet, 2018b). Some criticize the climate scientists for being too moderate, and that there is a caution culture amongst scientists (Hessen, 2020: 18-19; Oppenheimer et al., 2019). Some of the reason for this cautiousness is the need of consensus, especially when a work has multiple writers, like the IPCC report. It is easier to have consensus on a reduced conclusion, than a bold conclusion. The more extreme estimates are often cut. Most scientists want to avoid being called alarmist, and therefore reduce the boldness of their claims. This situation needs that scientists speak loud and clear (Hessen, 2020: 18-19).

It is not only scientists that do not want to use strong terms. Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg said hesitantly that yes, we are in a climate crisis, but since it will get worse we should wait with the strong terms (Molde, Zondag, & Krüger, 2019).

There has been an ambitious amount of agreements and goals, but the will to see these goals through has been disappointing. The tendency is that people rather use vague terms like ‘ambitious goals’, and ‘lowering emissions’ than use bold terms since these are harder to reach consensus on, and you might risk being called an alarmist. It is easier to agree on goals, than agree on *how* to reach these. This was the case for the recent COP’s. In 2018 they were going to make a ‘rulebook’ for the Paris Agreement such as how countries should register emission cut goals and how much they have cut. They did not agree, so they pushed this decision to COP 25 in 2019. Some of the causes they disagree on are the rules for buying and selling emission quotas. The other is loss and damage. Some poorer countries and small island states have been damaged by climate change, and it will affect them even more in the future. Who are going to pay to help them? This also causes disagreement. Many had hoped that COP 25 were to show the will to cooperate, that the whole world stands together against climate change. However, many was more concerned about their own interests. They agreed on a compromise on loss and damage, and the quota discussion was pushed one year ahead once again. They did implement a sentence that said that countries must increase their ambitions on emission cuts. If just a small number of countries are willing to work towards the Paris Agreement, the agreement does not have the impact it must have to reach the goals. In the Paris Agreement it says that every fifth years, the countries are going to meet and scale up their emission cuts. The first time this was going to happen was in 2020 (Nordenborg, 2019), but due to the corona virus in 2020, COP 26 is postponed (Hotvedt, 2020). Many can agree that we must do something, but *how* to do is harder to agree on. There is a formidable slowness in the system that must be changed to be able to avoid climate change tipping points. Even though there is a broad political agreement that we should stay below 1,5- or 2-degrees temperature rise, we do not have much time. And we must communicate this in a way that creates the social, political and technological tipping points needed to avoid devastating climate change tipping points (Hessen, 2020: 8-9). Many politicians seem eager to agree on goals, but not fulfill them or agreeing on *how* to fulfill the goals. When people hear about these agreements and meetings, it gives an impression that something is being done.

It is symptom calming when these goals are set, but not achieved which will be explained in the analysis. Seeing that young people are engaging in demonstrations, suing the state, and wanting to contribute sends a signal that change might be coming. Might this be the social tipping point needed to avoid climate tipping points? In the following different sociological and social psychology theories will be presented to give a better understanding of the topic.

### 3.0. Theory – Our house is on fire, a sociologist to the rescue

Climate change is mostly presented as a natural science topic. Despite increased calls for more social science research on climate change, very few sociologists have been engaged when in talking about how we have come to these climate circumstances, and how society can change its course (Norgaard, 2018). In the following, some of the ways social science can contribute and the theoretical framework used in this thesis will be presented.

#### 3.1. How can social science contribute?

The destructions of ecosystems are not new in the history of humans. Examples are the collapse of the former thriving and subtropical Easter Island (Diamond & Arneberg, 2012) and the devastating consequences of the “Kill a Sparrow” campaign in China which contributed to a famine that killed at least 20 million people in the years to follow (Christensen, 2017). Human conditions are causing environmental problems and the ecological aspects and social aspects are connected. To understand nature, one must understand the society and vice versa (Beck et al., 1997:101-103; Norgaard, 2018). People are causing climate change and climate change have social consequences. Violent conflicts, poverty, economic decrease and economic polarization will be enhanced by the climate changes (FN-Sambandet, 2016). Environmental sociology can contribute to give a better understanding on how sustainable problems are created which is important to prevent climate change (see e.g. Gåsdal & Sande, 2009:63-65; Norgaard, 2018). Sociology can be the leader in the conversation on the climate crisis and social science since it looks at the interactive dimensions of social orders between individuals, cultural systems, social norms, and political economy. Even though there are increasingly more science on the relation between human actions and how this impacts the biophysical system of the earth, called ecological imagination, there is still a lack of focus in the scientific community to look at the sociological imagination which refers to the relation within society that make up this environmentally damaging social structure (Norgaard, 2018). Environmental sociology can contribute as a knowledge discipline that can provide an understanding of the social processes that has led us into, and continue to take us further into, the crisis we are facing today. It can give us tools to navigate and create a basis to change our society into a more sustainable society adapted to nature’s tolerance limit. Three premises to develop good and relevant environmental sociology is: explaining the changes, integrate the material reality, and get close to people’s lives (Huseby, 2019).

The IPCC is dominated by natural scientists (Gåsdal & Sande, 2009:16) and Stoknes questions why the IPCC's climate reports do not include the audience's values, knowledge or beliefs in their reports. He sees a lack of attempts to connect the facts with the worries of ordinary people. The word 'social' is not in the reports at all, and 'human' is only used to mark human contributions or human influence on the climate system. The report is a collection of abstract universal climate facts written as if humans stand outside the climate, except through our CO2 emissions (Stoknes, 2017: 85-87).

Some of the theories that have tried to combine social science with natural science looks at how ecological and social systems influence each other. These are e.g. political ecology (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2010: 11-13), complexity theory (Gåsdal & Sande, 2009: 61-63) and the Gaia Hypothesis (Lovelock & Francke, 2006). A theory on why someone choose to overuse a natural resource is e.g. the tragedy of the commons. This is when someone uses a common good too aggressively, and potentially destroys it, in fear that others will use it completely. We tend to satisfy individual or national need for profit, rather than long term common goods (Gåsdal & Sande, 2009). We rather want to gain something today, than gain something bigger tomorrow. The 'hear and now' mentality is not good for the planet (Hessen, 2020: 28). The need for short-term gain is what we can see today, such as with the fires in the Amazonian rainforest. This has a time component since what we do today will affect the life chances of young people and future generations. The short-term profit seems to be worth the risk of the future living conditions. Thunberg argues that this is wrong, as will be presented in the analysis.

The climate crisis is a result of how we are organized, our daily lives and social systems. We must organize us in a different way to solve it. People be willing to change, and communication can be an important tool to manage this (Arnslett et al., 2018). Youths in Norway defined the relations between the local and global, and the future effects of climate emissions the hardest to understand. They wanted opportunities for them to contribute in the climate debate (Fløttum, Rivenes, & Dahl, 2014). When communicating climate change, it is important to focus on the local issues and solutions, what you can do to help, that what you do is efficient and that someone else is doing it as well (Lannoo & Reed, 2016; Arnslett et al., 2018). Successful strategies are to give people something concrete to do, and the opportunity of showing this to others and be a part of a community and be able to compete against others. Climate communicators must use language that resonate with the audience, make the message relevant for them, connect the message to the audience's values and emphasise values that focuses on others. People must relate to the spokesperson, and the message (Arnslett et al., 2018).

However, a lot of the research on the field are not giving most people the feeling that climate change is influencing their lives, such as research on climate quotas and new technology (Huseby, 2019; Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 15).

By looking at the social world, we can find out how and why we are affecting the climate and be able to foresee some of the social consequences of climate change. But even when these instructions on how to live eco-friendlier get more available, it seems like people do not listen. Stoknes suggests that if more social scientists worked as climate scientists, and not so many nature scientists, the approach to how climate change is communicated would be different. The tendency amongst climate scientists and how they communicate their research is that they believe that every human rationally and impartially weighs the evidence. But most people do not function like that. Climate disturbance is being communicated from scientists, and mostly aimed at other scientists, not 'normal people'. Humans are social beings, even though western cultures often are strongly individualistic. The presence of others affects our behavior, performance, and attention. The social attention is a strong motivator for action. Facts does not exist in a social vacuum, and to communicators should have this in mind (Stoknes, 2017: 85-89). Since Thunberg has been able to mobilize millions and created a global movement, this thesis can provide knowledge on climate communication by looking at the frames she uses. These frames can work as communication tools. Thunberg has changed something in the political arena by being heard, and getting people involved. The focus in this thesis is not on how people are influencing nature, or how nature is causing social issues. However, Thunberg's speeches connect these two worlds, and her speeches are the research material in this thesis.

### 3.2. Imaginaries and frames

People's willingness to listen to climate science or make sustainable actions can be connected to social imaginary and frames. Frames and imaginaries will be presented in this chapter, while the analysis process of how I will analyze will be explained in chapter 4.

Social imaginary is a shared sense of meaning, understanding, and orientation of complex issues. It is connected to the organizing and structure of institutions, economic activity and how people think they ought to be structured and organized (Levy et al., 2013). It is shared by many people in large groups, if not the whole society. It can be described as a common understanding amongst people which is the base for common practices and have a broad shared sense of legitimacy. Social imaginaries incorporate expectations we have for each other and the shared understandings allowing us to carry out the collective practices which makes up our social life.

This includes how we fit together in carrying out these common practices. It includes an understanding of norms, and implicit in this is the ability to recognize ideal cases. Beyond these ideals stands a notion of a moral order where these norms, values and ideals makes sense in that context. A sense of moral order is the underlying norms of our social practice and a sense of what makes these norms realizable. Many social imaginaries exist simultaneously and are often shared by different societies. The understanding of what we are doing makes the sense it does due to our grasp on the broader context, such as how we stand in relation to other people, power, time, and space. If someone is demonstrating the utopic or impossible, the confidence that they and other people can maintain is based on images of moral order through which we understand human history and human life and that is within our range of possibilities. Images of moral order can infuse revolutionary practice, as well as they can support the status quo (Taylor, 2002: 106-110). Framing can be understood as a way of expressing imaginaries.

Frames are defined as mental structures that are organizing interpretation and perception (Johnston, 1995: 217). It refers to an inevitably relational dimension of meaning. It describes the unstated rules or principles that are in various degrees implicitly set by social agents by larger and invisible entities within the interaction (in the foreword by Berger in Goffman, 1986). Frames are produced by a specific sender under the influence of the mental interpretations. Framing is to highlight some elements and leave other elements out. Framing contributes to four important functions: a specific definition of the problem, an interpretation of the causes, a moral evaluation and a recommendation on how the problem should be treated. Each of these can be more or less explicit in the text, and not all four needs to be present in the individual frame. This definition of framing makes it possible to look for certain aspects that together form a frame (Entman, 2015; Hjarvard, 2015: 105). Framing can therefore be seen as a way of express and define the problem and responsibility. This is connected to imaginaries and how people understand situations.

Might Thunberg's success of mobilizing be that she communicates climate imaginaries and values clearly and therefore connects these, and not just speak of science? Since the topic of Thunberg's speeches is climate, four core climate imaginaries will be presented and connected with frames. Suggestions of frames that can work well to communicate these imaginaries, or appeal to people within these imaginaries will be discussed before exploring how mental barriers can help people avoid or ignore climate change. Imaginaries and frames are the main theoretical framework of this thesis.



### Climate imaginary

Climate imaginary is a shared understanding of prioritization of environmental and cultural values and modes of organizing production and consumption. Climate imaginaries cannot become dominant unless they connect broader popular interests and identities with technological and economical aspects of the energy system to constitute value regimes. Value regimes are materialized visions of viable policies and economic structures. Value regimes links imaginaries with certain sets of production methods, technologies, and market structures. It includes the economic aspects, regulations, market structures, and the normative and cultural values. The success of a value regime is connected to the articulation of attractive visions which connects the identities and interests of wide groups (Levy et al., 2013). The climate change frames Stoknes claims works best are about humans and their lives, homes, lungs, values, security and local job opportunities, and not about polar ice or abstract statistics. With these frames, climate becomes connected to topics people already care about, such as people, economy, jobs, and health. Long term structural societal changes are needed to stabilize a more connected climate system in the long run. We have to constantly think of what holes exists in the frames and how to fill them. Our thoughts on climate changes are all in all about how we understand our health, safety and future opportunities (Stoknes, 2017: 178-180). Many debates, including the climate debate, can be characterized by an attempt of definition power. When people have different understandings, beliefs, values and associations, the debate can become more about defining the issues and solutions. If people believe in different imaginaries, this can be the case. Therefore, it is important to have knowledge of these different understandings when analysing climate messages. Four core climate imaginaries are ‘climate apocalypse’, ‘fossil fuels forever’, ‘techno-market’ and ‘sustainable lifestyles’ (Levy et al., 2013).

### Climate apocalypse

The climate apocalypse imaginary paints a picture of catastrophe in the coming decades. This imaginary might appeal to populists but can also be counterproductive. It has been criticized for only offering self-denial and self-sacrifice. The rhetoric serves elite interests by defining CO<sub>2</sub> as a common enemy which will require technical solutions. Many climate scientists have been reluctant to get involved with this imaginary since it is associated with scenarios that were considered too extreme for the public policy. The appeal this imaginary has is not universal. It is disavowed and avoided by businesses since it can lead to a deeper questioning of capitalism and consumerism, support for environmental organization and heavier governmental regulations. Since changes in energy and transportation infrastructures are expensive, governments have been hesitant to embrace the urgent scenarios (Levy et al., 2013).

The most common frames of the climate are catastrophe and uncertainty. When climate change has been in the news, it has often been with the perspectives of catastrophe, destruction, uncertainty, costs, high price, loss, and sacrifice. These are present in around 80 % of the news of climate change and in different political contexts (Stoknes, 2017: 161-162) and can be placed in the climate apocalypse imaginary. These frames are not normally motivating people. When most frames are negative, the tendency is that people are avoiding the topic completely. Fear, guilt, and the feeling of loss does not normally create engagement. It usually creates a need to avoid the topic, and uncertainty and doubt kill determinedness (Stoknes, 2017: 161-162; Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 14). Research on climate communication is now seeing a frame that leads to action. Talk of climate using conceptions as security, insurance, emergency preparedness and above all: a positive possibility. Communicating a message on the positive consequences of emission cuts creates more willingness to change actions than a message of loss (Stoknes, 2017: 161-162). However, focusing on how global climate changes threatens the everyday life of the poorer parts of the world can increase people awareness on the seriousness of climate changes. Therefore, it is important to look communicate how to combine it with a positive framing and present concrete solutions (Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 21). How to present a message with the focus on loss can be: “Ongoing changes in the climate have the potential to reach certain tipping points at which significant key events may be triggered.” Saying the same, but with a gain perspective can be: “Reducing further changes in the climate helps to defend against the reaching of certain tipping points for significant key events”. The gain perspective leads to action since they are perceived as securing measures like taking a vaccine to avoid sickness which offers people a way of avoiding negative consequences (Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 14).

The ones within the climate apocalypse imaginary are likely to frame climate change issues as a catastrophe. The feeling of an awaiting catastrophe can lead to inaction and the feeling of helplessness. How people use different mental barriers to avoid climate action will be presented after a presentation of the rest of the climate imaginaries and suggestions of frames. Even though the most used frame is the one of catastrophe and uncertainty, this does not necessarily imply that the media believes in the climate apocalypse imaginary. The media wants to be read, so this might seem like a more thrilling story when it is portrayed as a catastrophe. However, this might cause people to avoid these news.

## Techno-market

The techno-market imaginary is based on optimistic ecological modernization with advanced clean energy technologies. It has appealed to elite discourses of entrepreneurship and market but has not worked as well in popular culture nor linked it with people's everyday worries. The clean energy value regime has been an elitist project and has had a shaky economic base and weak political organization. The oil industry has therefore had opportunities of undermining this regime (Levy et al., 2013). Those believing in the techno-market imaginary are likely to frame climate issues as an economic challenge or a technical issue which will need a technical solution. Instead of focusing on the sacrifice connected to climate change, we should focus on the opportunities. If someone feels like other people are trying to deny them a SUV and a steak due to a green future, they do it discouraged. If actions to improve the climate can lead to a society where the electric cars have faster acceleration than the old car, this can be more appealing than only focusing on losses. The possibility framing emphasizes that new green solutions are reducing emissions, and offers a better life, are more competitive and offers more and better jobs. A better growth, and better climate (Stoknes, 2017: 174-176). People in general have an aversion to loss. The climate crisis is presented almost exclusively with the perspective of loss. We are losing forests, species, water, coral reefs, snow, and ice. The climate solutions have been presented in the framing of loss such as carbon taxes, emissions cuts, and regulations. We are going to lose the opportunity to eat meat and dairy, travel wherever whenever and shop whatever we want. People and politicians are mostly more disgusted than attracted to the talk of costs. It is more productive to frame climate with security and insurance and come up with solutions to how we secure ourselves against additional climate disturbances tomorrow. We buy fire insurance even though we are not convinced that our house will burn down in the coming years. Most households and companies use a lot of money to insure against these kinds of risks, since fires might happen. It is wise to pay some insurance today to avoid huge climate disturbances tomorrow. Some of the risk evaluations normal people do, are at the same time frame as the climate impacts, such as pensions which will not give us money in the next forty years or so. In these forty years, we are expected to see big consequences of climate change. By not acting now, the economy and businesses can avoid becoming extremely vulnerable to losses in the future. This frames the climate changes as a crisis we cannot afford to ignore and turns the conventional cost framing upside down. Another strategy that seems to work is to frame the sustainability costs of today as a slow increase of future income. The national income level will continue to rise, and we can afford to reduce the increase a bit to ensure that our future becomes a little bit better (Stoknes, 2017: 163-166).

When people see climate change as a technical issue, they are likely to want technical solutions. Therefore, the ones wanting new technical solutions, emission trading systems, investments in green solution and geoengineering are likely believing in the techno-market imaginary. If climate issues are framed with a positive tone, such as a new, green, and better technology. More people are likely to get involved if they see it as a 'great opportunity'. However, it has been hard to connect with normal people since it is seen as an elitist project. The ones criticizing electrical bikes or electrical cars as solutions criticizes this imaginary.

### Sustainable lifestyle

The sustainable lifestyle imaginary focuses on a simpler, less materialistic life with sustainable consumption and localism. The set of values are focusing on stronger community, small scale productions, and co-ops. It roots back to a romanticism of rural life which was a reaction to the industrialization of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This sustainable lifestyle is a well-known idea but has not been a hit in popular discourse. When the dominant culture has strong values of consumerism and careerism, a simpler life with less luxury is a risky strategy. It has not been successful in constructing a stable value regime. It has been on the opposite side of dominant consumeristic values of branding, comfort, and convenience, and has limited appeal. The creation of sustainable business models and the imaginary has not been able to articulate with a material economy, creating a viable value regime. The possibility of getting a supportive network with professionals, corporate -, and state actors is hard around such a project, much since it has been unclear how reducing consumption can align with growth and lowering unemployment (Levy et al., 2013). This imaginary can relate to a frame that present climate action to improve health and life quality. Universal frames such as 'global climate', 'the planet' and 'the environment' increases the experienced distance to the topic. It is better to connect climate change to our emotions towards family, our hometown, friends, and children. And above all: health (Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 21; Stoknes, 2017: 167-170). The most efficient way to get through the ambivalence towards climate action is to emphasis what is instantly threatening human life and health. To create awareness on how our health is influenced seems to be a powerful way to make people care, by framing the climate disturbances as something concrete and personal. Our health depends on nature and climate. People's emotional reactions to the climate message have often been ignored, both in research and in the attempts of getting the message out. Health framing seems to create a broader engagement across political divisions than safety framing of the climate cause (Stoknes, 2017: 167-170). Focusing on health, working together to protect us all, universalism, feeling of community and responsibility and protection of nature are positive framings that can be efficient since it has a focus on the personal aspects.

What can I do to be a part of something bigger? (Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 21-22). The ones believing in a sustainable lifestyle imaginary are likely to frame the climate change issues as problems due to overconsumption and that we have an individual ethical responsibility to solve it. This is also in line with the development of sustainability presented earlier. It became an individualised responsibility to demand eco-labelling of groceries etc. This might be the result of someone wanting to live a sustainable lifestyle, but it can also be a result of people wanting to push the responsibility away from systems, organisations, and capitalism for example. They make it a more individualized problem to avoid being responsible themselves.

### Fossil fuels forever

In the fossil fuels forever-imaginary it does not exist a scientific consensus that fossil fuels have an impact on the climate. And if it is, necessary technological solutions like carbon storage and carbon capture can be developed at a reasonable cost. In this imaginary, plentiful cheap fossil fuels have been the reason for progress and prosperity which has fueled the industrialization process and the associated material comforts. New technology facilitates the extraction and discovery of fuels from places that used to be inaccessible, such as shale rock. Control on fossil fuels could end in severe economic dislocation which will threaten routines and comforts of industrialized societies and deprive the developing societies of prospects of growth. Carbon intense sectors have this imaginary as a favorite, and these sectors have tried to portray the contrast between a prosperous world based on fossil fuels vs. a cold, dark future with poverty if fossil fuels are restricted. Many actors have been brought together in this imaginary, such as governments who are concerned about employment and competitiveness, especially in countries where the fossil fuel sector is big (Levy et al., 2013). Those believing in the fossil fuels forever imaginary are likely to not frame the climate crisis as anything, since it is not a crisis according to them. Fossil fuels are the reason for progress and wealth, and the reduction or control on fossil fuels will threaten our lifestyles. They might take the uncertainties of climate science as evidence that climate change does not exist, and observable gains such as profit trumps non-observable risks like climate change. To frame the climate cause within an uncertainty frame, is normal for most scientists since climate change revolves around long term consequences. Climate scientists are experts on uncertainty and probabilities. Most people hear that the scientists ‘do not know’ when they talk about uncertainties, probabilities, and error margins. This has been used as a weapon by the deniers. When some climate activists have said that there is no uncertainty, they have activated and psychologically strengthened the uncertainty framing. Rather than discussing the pros and cons of uncertainty in climate models, we could rather use the framing of readiness and ethics (Stoknes, 2017: 170-172).

These are not framings that the fossil fuels forever imaginary would use but can be used instead of the uncertainty frame which has been used as a weapon by the deniers. Readiness is how we today should prepare ourselves on the upcoming changes, how we should strengthen our resistance and therefore feel safer. Extreme climate changes might be unpredictable, but they are far from unthinkable. Therefore, it is better to think through and prepare for what we should do to be on the safe side. We wear a seatbelt even though we do not think we are going to crash, but we might. We should prepare ourselves on the possible outcomes. With this frame of readiness, it seems to be common sense to adapt and prepare, while doing nothing would be stupid, unethical, and irresponsible. A part of the readiness framing is to lower the speed of the global warming and reduce the risk by reducing our own emissions. Talking about preventing pollution and protect the air we breathe convince more people than the conventional uncertainty frames. When we start to prepare ourselves against the climate changes through concrete actions, they are experienced as closer, more real and more pressuring, and we can become more susceptible to act. By acting to prepare ourselves we push towards to see the cause as something more politically important. However, many doubtful and dismissive people might perceive the message from a safety framing of the climate cause as an attempt to force a connection between a cause they are passionate about (national security) and a cause they reject (climate change), or that the claims tried to take ownership of matters they care deeply about (Stoknes, 2017: 170-172). The second frame that can replace the overused insecurity frame, is the ethic perspective. Again, this is not a frame that would be used by those believing in the fossil fuels forever imaginary, but it can replace the uncertainty frame often used as a weapon for those wanting to ignore climate change. The climate change deniers often say that it is a waste doing anything if the bigger countries do not do so, or that it is a lot of expenses without a gain in the future. But the measures on climate destruction is more about ethics and values than the uncertainty in the science or other countries actions. The scientific uncertainty is a distraction. We should rather focus on the value-based questions that should steer our climate policies. Such as how far are we going to let our use of resources go at the expense of poorer people, ecosystems and the 'more than human' world. How are we going to compare long term consideration to future generations with the considerations to our short-term cost? Many react to climate science, not because of the science itself, but because they do not like the measures that are suggested, such as higher gasoline taxes. Climate science cannot answer value-based political questions. The models, measurements and metrics that are used in climate science, cannot solve the value conflicts: are temperature rise on 1, 2, 3 or 4 degrees ethically proper?

Negotiation, ethics, conflict management and choice of frames to political discussion are methods that are more suited for that. We are in nature, and if we destroy what brings life around us, we are destroying ourselves and relatives without noticing it at first. This should be the reason for limiting emissions, not because other countries do it first, or it is economically profitable, or because every effect of the climate changes are 100 % certain, but since we gain life by changing. Then, we are protecting and caring about something bigger than us. If climate campaigns use a broader and value-based framing, it might have a bigger effect than appealing to profitability and self-benefits, and rather promote inner motivated values such as empathy, relations, community, and interaction. This can have a more long-term effect since it supports cultural values bigger than us and builds upon the feeling of working towards a mutual, and not individual, goals (Stoknes, 2017: 172-174). Values can be driving forces behind people engagement and identifying values and built the message and climate communication around these values can increase peoples feeling of responsibility to the development. Those with more egalitarian values are more likely to care about climate changes, and examples on values they have in common are equality, unity with nature, friendship and responsibility. These values align with climate messages, and the value of being a part of something bigger than themselves. Messages that promote self-development values with the focus on power, richness and success should be avoided since these can hinder climate action (Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 8-10). This is in line with one of the main frames Thunberg uses which is called the moral prophet frame in this thesis. Focusing on ethics or readiness might not work for people who believe in the fossil fuel forever imaginary, since they often do not believe in climate science. Then, the ethics or readiness does not matter since there is no problem.

### [Dominant imaginaries and value regimes](#)

Dominant imaginaries are having a broader resonance with people's everyday lives by connecting popular interests and identities. They are linked with material structures that constitutes value regimes that has had hegemonic stability through the alignment of discursive, economic, and political elements. The current value regime is the fossil fuel-based regime which is anchored in technological and economic foundations and reinforced by energy intense lifestyles. However, support for the fossil fuels forever imaginary has eroded. Reasons for why new imaginaries have failed to capture public imagination can be that they appear too elitist, radical, or gloomy, and has not been connected with viable business models to create successful value regimes (Levy et al., 2013). We are not lacking solutions, but climate policies that requires lowering emissions, does not have a lot of support by the people nor the industry.

The politicians in power might know what to do, but do not know how to be re-elected after doing it (Stoknes, 2017: 52). The strength of the climate imaginaries depends on the appeal it has to the identities and interests of a wide range of groups and how it aligns with technological and economic structures. Climate imaginaries are important to provide future-oriented visions for the industry and coordinating wider policy activity. The way governments, firms and NGO's respond to climate change might be shaped by the dominating climate imaginaries (Levy et al., 2013). In the following, five mental barriers which help people avoid and ignore climate change will be presented. The mental barriers can be strengthened by using certain frames or be more used by people within certain imaginaries.

#### [Mental barriers to avoid the topic of climate change](#)

Communication is both giving information and receiving information. Even though I only focus on Thunberg's speeches in this thesis, looking at how the message of climate communication can be received is important to understand the full picture of climate communication. I can only make assumptions on which mental barriers can be used based on previous research done by others. Providing information on how mental barriers can be used to avoid the topic is relevant to get a broader understanding on climate communication in general, and Thunberg's climate communication specifically. I briefly connect the barriers to some of the imaginaries presented previously in this chapter, before this will be further explored in the analysis.

Even though most Norwegians see climate change as an important challenge and knows about the connection between emissions and climate, most of us are not interested in changing (Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 1). Many want to avoid the topic, and those with the most knowledge on climate change, are the ones who are mostly worried and are more willing to use public funds to reduce climate risks (Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 4). It is easy to distance and doubt our way away from climate facts. Especially when we are presented abstract, scary, polarizing, and accusatory doomsday-representations. Our minds have a rich repertoire of ways to protect itself against this and avoid changing behavior. We rather go for the information we want to hear, that suits our identity and strengthen our self-esteem. During more than three decades, scientists, advocates and others have tried to reach out with facts on climate change and tried to break the inner barriers that divides what we know from what we do. They have been met by counterattacks, and a seemingly impenetrable wall of psychological setbacks or indifference (Stoknes, 2017: 122). Stoknes identifies five defense barriers humans activate and uses as invisible, inner defense walls that prevents the messages from leading to engagement and action. I will in my analysis see if Thunberg tries to go against some of these barriers.



### Distance barrier

We cannot see the direct effects of climate change. It feels like it is far away from our everyday lives in time, location, influence and responsibility (Stoknes, 2017: 123-125; Arnslett et al., 2018). When the message has something to do with the people's everyday life, people feel like they can contribute and that it is local, not global. Focusing on what works, and what individuals can do to be a part of something bigger is a society-perspective where people feel like they do something others are doing as well (Lannoo & Reed, 2016: 15-16). When we are told that climate change is bad for the polar bears, or that the temperature will rise in many years, there is no sense of urgency, nor do we see the connection between climate change and our actions. It is non-observable and easier to ignore, and therefore easy to not feel the responsibility. This can be connected to the fossil fuels forever imaginary. If we believe that the fossil fuels will last forever, the distance barrier might help to ignore the climate science. The climate apocalypse imaginary however does not strengthen the distance barrier since that imaginary focuses on how the world is going under, which in a sense makes it closer in time and space since we are all facing a catastrophe within that imaginary.

### Doom barrier

When climate change is framed as a sneaking catastrophe that will only result in loss, costs and sacrifice, most people will rather avoid the topic. The feeling of helplessness grows and we become immune to the warnings because the scientists and advocates have said that the end is near so many times, that we do not notice it anymore (Stoknes, 2017: 123-125). This can be a barrier found amongst the ones criticizing the climate apocalypse barrier. As mentioned, the message of a catastrophe might get someone to act, however it might also be counterproductive by increasing the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness.

### Denial barrier

By ignoring or passively avoid acknowledging the disturbing facts on climate change, we manage to protect ourselves against fear and guilt. By actively deny and mock climate change, we can win over the ones we feel criticize our lifestyle. The 'elite' who thinks they know better and try to tell us how to live. Denial comes from self-defense, not ignorance, low intelligence or little information (Stoknes, 2017: 123-125). Denial is also a general approach to image repair. Denying the claims, shifting the blame, minimizing, differentiating and transcendence are strategies to avoid responsibility. Some might also say that they did not have the information or the ability to do anything about it (Benoit, 1997:179-180). These are self-defense strategies to feel better about themselves and their choices. Many in the fossil fuels forever imaginary does not believe in climate science. If they ignore it, they do not have to be scared or feel guilty.

### Dissonance barrier

If what we know contradicts what we do, there is cognitive dissonance. The lack of climate action and social support leads to weakened climate attitudes. By doubting or trivialize what we know, we can feel better about the way we live. This way, actual behavior and social relations are slowed down and reverses the change of our climate attitudes in the long run (Stoknes, 2017: 123-125). It is impossible to see any positive effect on climate change based on living a sustainable lifestyle. The temperature does not automatically drop when you stop eating meat. It is therefore easy to reduce the feeling of guilt since it does not seem to matter what one person does, and therefore continue to do something you know is bad for the climate (Arnslett et al., 2018). This barrier can probably be used amongst those in the fossil fuel forever imaginary. Even though many people are denying that climate change exists, it seems like many knows that there is something bad about the way we live but does not really want to acknowledge it. Or they know about it but does not let it influence their actions. Some in the techno-market imaginary might think that since we probably are inventing new technology that can save us, we can continue with business as usual and not take sustainable actions, even though we know that our actions influence the climate.

### Identity barrier

We filter news through our occupational or cultural identity. We look for information that confirm our values and filter away information that challenges them. Cultural identity overrules the facts. If new information demands that we change, this information will probably lose (Stoknes, 2017: 123-125). Our convictions are reinforced when we only expose ourselves to certain facts. This is especially easy in digital echo chambers where we can avoid those with other views and have challenging facts (Hessen, 2020: 14). The sustainable lifestyle imaginary is not focusing on separate actions, but a whole life and identity built around sustainability. It goes against the consumerism and capitalism many see as a big part of their life. When people meet someone who is within the sustainable lifestyle imaginary, they themselves might feel like their identity, who they are, and their values are being criticized. Therefore, many might avoid those situations since this challenge their identity. Imaginaries such as the techno-market imaginary has been criticized for being an elite project which can make people criticize their solutions or definitions of what the issue is.

Since the ones in the fossil fuel forever imaginary are denying climate science, they probably can use most of these barriers. Those within the sustainable lifestyle does not use as many barriers since they let the climate change influence their lifestyle and how they live.

The fossil fuels forever is the only one that is not unanimously believing in climate science. Climate apocalypse, techno-market and sustainable lifestyle imaginary all believe in climate change, and uses different frames on what the issue is, and how we can solve it. The ones in the climate apocalypse imaginary can likely use the doom barrier to avoid having to act. The fossil fuels forever imaginary might not use the doom barrier but can rather use the fact that so many have said that the world is going under for many years, that they get immune to this information. They can use the denial barrier, and if they think that there might be a climate change issue, they can use the distance barrier since it is in the future, or regarding polar bears far away. They are also likely to avoid those they feel are criticizing their lifestyle and will rather filter away the information which goes against their beliefs and values. It is more tempting to go after information that confirms their own values and beliefs. The ones believing in the techno-market imaginary might use the time aspect of the distance barrier by believing that we have time to invent and produce technical solution. The dissonance barrier can be one of the hardest ones I believe, since it can be easy to acknowledge that our lives have some sort of an impact since there is a scientific consensus of human made climate change. Acting accordingly is however not as easy. One can believe in the sustainable lifestyle imaginary, and still eat meat or fly for example. When your neighbor is worse than you, it is easier to justify your own actions since you are not 'the worst'. Even if you know what you should and should not do. That we are not reaching the goals and agreements can indicate that we see a dissonance barrier amongst the leaders. They know what to do since they agreed on it, but do not act accordingly.

As previously mentioned, a social, political, and technological tipping point might be needed to avoid climate change tipping points. Like so many other cultural changes, persistent and patient attempts to weaken and dissolve the resistance to climate science can succeed. One day we will wake up and see that everyone else are marching as well. People must want to live in a climate friendly society, because they think it is better, not because they are being moralized, scared or told to do so (Stoknes, 2017: 120-127). Even though some claim that shaming does not work, some are more positive to guilt. There is a fear of applying shame to others, such as flight shame, meat shame or oil shame. Bold messages from scientists and activists can lead to people feeling bad about their contribution to climate change, which can lead to action. Our consciousness contribute to our good treatment of others, and since human beings are social beings, we have social compasses to guide us (Hessen, 2020: 27-28). Thunberg goes against many of the recommendations on climate communication, but shaming the leaders is an important part of her message, as will be discussed in the analysis.

### 3.3. Charismatic leadership

Thunberg's ability to mobilize has been more efficient than any other climate movement. She as a person is important to understand the frames and her appeal. I therefore wanted to investigate Weber's charismatic ideal type to see if this aligns with Thunberg. It is important to note that these are extreme and pure types, and a simplification of reality. First, a short presentation of social movements and its political power.

As mentioned, she has started a social movement called Fridays For Future. Social movements have become a political mean like other conventional political instrument, and it has in the last five decades played an important role in the social and political landscape in most western countries. A social movement is a social interaction over time that consist of a mix of looser and more organized social networks, that challenges someone's power. The participants have some sort of collective identity and understanding that can be an expression of solidarity. In a social movement one tries to achieve goals through actions in the public, often protests and is usually directed at someone (Seippel, 2003). The system is based on personal loyalty, and legitimized through faith in the properties of the leader and the duty the followers feel towards her (Lepsius, 2006: 176). Fridays for future is a movement striking on Fridays to show their discontent for the lack of focus on sustainability as described earlier. I will not go deeper into the movement since the movement itself is not the focus in this thesis. However, being aware of this movement is important since it has become an important political asset, and strengthens some of her arguments, as will be discussed in the analysis. She is the leader and the symbol of the movement and possess charismatic qualities. Charisma is how people perceive someone as the leader, and that this quality they perceive, is extraordinary for the leader. Charisma is based on the social relationship between a person with charismatic qualities and the people believing in the charisma. The leader has a sense of duty, or personal devotion to the cause and demands new obligations and the dissolution of normative standards, forms of organization and modes of conduct. If the charismatic leader does not change the social system or complies with the expectations of a leader's role, they are not a charismatic leader even if they are prestigious, talented, or idolized. Charisma is not only a word to describe prestige, popularity, or personal excellence. It is rather a force that may result in new orientation of attitudes towards the world and all forms of lives. It can change attitudes and direction of action. Charismatic leaders have special qualifications, they gain trust and have great expectations directed at them. They create new positions of leadership, a new cognitive definition of the situation and new patterns of social relations (Lepsius, 2006: 175-177).

Trying to define a situation is related to imaginaries and frames. Different imaginaries are different definitions of the situation. It is not only important that the leader has these qualities, there must also be a situation that makes room for such a leader and movement.

A latent charismatic situation is necessary for the establishment of charismatic leadership. It has both a cultural and social dimension. The cultural dimension is that it must be culturally plausible to influence human faith and that these powers can be the qualities of a person. The social precondition necessary for a latent charismatic situation, is the perception of a crisis. People must be aware of an incapacity to overcome the crisis, and this delegitimizes the existing political institutions. Hope grows that a 'powerful person' will come and change the situation. It is necessary to have a political culture where this option is even plausible. If it exists an applicant for leadership who have a promise of salvation that is perceived to be appropriate to solve the crisis, the latent charismatic situation can become manifest. Charismatic leaders address ultimate values such as survival, honor, justice, self-respect. They often present the Manichean dualism of good or bad, survival or death, right or wrong. The pursuit of ultimate values, and not the practical solution of everyday problems is the charismatic mission. The perception of ultimate values increases the chances for acceptance of the claim to ultimate authority. When the charismatic leader defines the crisis and solutions, the charismatic leader is the only person able to solve it, since they have the ultimate authority over the definition. To be able to make the causal connection between concrete solution to the crisis and the abstract values, the political culture must have some assumptions of causality which makes the hope for salvation through an extraordinary person plausible (Lepsius, 2006: 177-179). The Manichean dualism is very present in Thunberg's speeches, which will be explored in the analysis.

The applicants bid for charismatic leadership must include some extraordinary qualities and monopoly over ideology. This involves an attack on alternative definitions of the status quo (Lepsius, 2006: 179-186). Fridays for Future and Thunberg the speaker did not happen in a vacuum. The latent charismatic situation was several decades of increasingly improved climate science and multiple international agreements, reports and goals, but lack of achieving the agreements. Many of the national fractions of the movement might have begun regardless of Thunberg. However, she has probably brought the awareness and sense of community that would not be possible without her as a common idol in such a short time. With her as the symbol, it might have seemed more concrete and unifying for the different fractions, across borders. As mentioned, it might not have been a coincidence that she is Swedish, and that this happened in Sweden. She was stepping in the footsteps of Pippi, Olof Palme and Bamse.

When she was contacted after her text in 2018, she was contacted because many wanted to do something to put climate on the agenda. These are all aspects of the latent charismatic situation, which became manifest when Thunberg became spokesperson of the cause. She has become a symbol of the young climate movement.

In the previous chapters the context of ecological sustainability, different perspectives on sustainability and some of the international reports, goals and agreements was presented to explain the context. The theoretical chapter looked at how social science can contribute to climate research, that imaginaries are common understandings, and that frames are ways to communicate these. The four core climate imaginaries are climate apocalypse imaginary, techno-market imaginary, sustainable lifestyle imaginary and fossil fuels forever imaginary. How people frame climate change issues is an indication of which imaginary they believe in. Different mental barriers can be used to avoid the topic of climate change, and to avoid taking action or feeling guilt. Even though the aim of this thesis is not to look at the people who perceive her, it is likely that she is appealing to those believing in the same imaginaries as her since they will believe in the same issues, solutions and values. What a social movement is was briefly presented, and some aspects of the ideal type of a charismatic leader. All of this will be connected to Thunberg in the analysis. The topic of this thesis is climate communication, and language is therefore vital. This will be presented in the following chapter on method where critical discourse analysis and rhetorical appeals are explored.

## 4.0. Method – Our eyes are upon you

If the climate science is clear, why are we not taking the actions needed? If people simply do not know nor realize the consequences, the communication between the science, the leaders and the people can be the problem. We need to communicate the findings of climate science, discuss consequences and debate alternative responses. We need to have a discourse. Therefore, it is interesting to explore climate communication with Thunberg's speeches as the study object. This research is a critical discourse analysis with an inductive approach to frame analysis. Thunberg's speeches are examined to find out how she is framing the climate change. I placed rhetorical appeals in the method-chapter since it somewhat guides the analysis and is an integral part of the methodological approach, even though this could also be placed in chapter 3. Discourse analysis is both methodological and theoretical, but I still chose to have a separate chapter on method. Since rhetoric is about convincing people, and she tries to convince on what is right and wrong, I included rhetorical appeals in this thesis. I will only focus on the rhetorical appeals, not so much on the other aspects of rhetorical analysis for now. It would be interesting later and could be the complete focus of a master thesis, but in this thesis, the frames are the focus. Since *she* is an important aspect of the message and she tries to convince us about what we should do, the rhetorical appeals are included.

### 4.1. Critical discourse analysis

Language is important in communication; it represents facts and realities and influence attitudes and actions. Language can create new realities and is therefore a vital part of the cultural conditions that underlie our social development (Fløttum, 2017). Language must be considered when doing social analysis since it is an irreducible part of social life (Fairclough, 2003: 2). Looking at language within a context is called discourse analysis. The empirical material can be texts, actions, institutional routines and speeches (Grue, 2019). The research material of this thesis is Thunberg's speeches. A discourse can be defined as text in context and it is an institutional and historically rooted way of thinking, speaking and acting (Tønnesson, Gedde-Dahl, & Revold, 2002: 220). Looking beyond the text for factual material is seeing the text as a holistic construct and can clarify what is tacitly understood in the text, yet necessary for full interpretation (Johnston, 1995: 221-222). An analysis of discourse will explore what ways of thinking, attitudes, opinions, and ideological backgrounds we take for granted when we express ourselves, and what lies implicit within the text. Discourse can be a certain way to express ourselves that reflect the way we think of the topic (Hågvar, 2013).

Discourses reflect certain interpretations of the world, or how it is believed to be. They can represent possible worlds that are different from the actual world and can contribute to turn societies in different directions (Skrede, 2017: 35; Fairclough, 2003: 124). Discourse is an important form of social practice that reproduces and changes knowledge, identities, and social relations and at the same time is formed by other social practices and structures. Discourse is both constituted and constituting since it forms and reforms social identities, cultures, structures and processes, but it also reflects and reproduces them (Unger, Wodak, & KhosraviNik, 2016: 278; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999: 77). Discourses represent aspects of the world from a certain point of view and is therefore connected to imaginaries and frames. As presented earlier, the climate discourse consists of various frames like the health and heart-framing, the loss and destruction frame, insurance frame etc. These are related to imaginaries which can explain why some chooses a certain frame to express their imaginary. In this thesis, there are therefore two levels of analyzing of a discourse, both frames and imaginaries. The main focus is on the frames she uses but analyzing her frames will give an indication for which imaginary she believes in and criticizes.

*Critical* discourse analysis is problem-oriented and contains a variety of approaches that all look at text and how it maintains or change power, injustice, social, political-economic or culture in a society. Critical does not mean negative, the research object can be any social phenomenon that can be challenged and not taken for granted. Critical discourse studies are interested in investigating texts to de-mystify ideologies and power (Unger et al., 2016: 278). The critical perspective in critical discourse analysis is that the scientist asks how the discursive practice contributes to legitimize or contradict established social structures in society (Hågvar, 2013). Foucault is often used in critical discourse analysis since he focuses on power relations. He aims to reveal the structures and rules of what can be said, what is unthinkable, and what is considered true or false (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999: 22). Language is not neutral, and the user of the language has a certain perspective on the world. One person can be called a terrorist by some, and a freedom fighter by others. It depends if the user of the word wants to show support or condemnation (Grue, 2019). To identify discourses, one can identify the main parts of the world that is represented and identify the perspective that is promoted (Fairclough, 2003: 129). Discourses can express ideological positions and contribute to the cementation and justification of power imbalances (Skrede, 2017: 21; Unger et al., 2016: 279-280). Therefore, frames should not be regarded as simple “points of view”, but expressions of imaginaries which in turn often reflect a satisfaction or dissatisfaction with existing power relations.



In this thesis, the dominance relation is generational since she is a young girl, and that the ones in power has failed since they choose not to act on what is morally right according to Thunberg. This will be explained further in the analysis. Imaginaries are understandings and values and therefore ideological. Using critical discourse analysis as the method to analyze Thunberg's speeches will enlighten which imaginaries she promotes, and which frames she uses to express her beliefs and values.

### Three-dimensional analysis model

Norman Fairclough's three dimensional analysis model is an analytical model and consist of three levels: social events, social practices and social structures (Fairclough, 2003:23-24). The social events of this thesis are Greta Thunberg's speeches. By looking at it on a micro level, the questions of what she is saying, and what it is about will be explored (Skrede, 2017:21). Social practices are a description of the social context the text is a part of on a macro level and is socially regulated ways to act (Fairclough, 2003: 25). This will for example be that she is a young girl and not a politician, speaking at international summits. She is challenging the status quo and what can be expected from a young girl. Social structures are abstract entities, but Fairclough refers to it as defining potential and possibilities (Fairclough, 2003:23). Social structures look at the society that exists outside the text itself. The societal macro conditions contain stable structural patterns that influence our daily life, such as economic structures, power relations and bureaucracy. Capitalism is a social structure that influence many social events in the world (Skrede, 2017: 32-33) including Thunberg's message, as will be explained in the analysis. One has to ask if an established way of thinking and writing are connected with the socio economic or political context of society (Hågvar, 2013). The relationship can be complex between what actually happens and what is structurally possible (Fairclough, 2003:23-24). Fairclough's three dimensional model is complicated and often used wrong (Johannessen, Rafoss, & Rasmussen, 2018). The three-dimensional model will be used as an inspiration in this study, not a complete and detailed analytical recipe. To understand how she tries to convince us on what is right and wrong, rhetorical appeals and legitimation will be presented in the following.

## 4.2. Rhetorical appeals

Rhetorical utterances are attempts to make something happen by convincing others (Aristoteles & Eide, 2006: 27). The purpose of the utterance is often implicit, and not always what is said word by word. Rhetorical utterance includes all forms of communication, such as body language, clothes, and the use of props if they are involved in the attempts to convince.

We can divide it between past directed, present directed and future directed rhetoric. Past directed rhetoric is an attempt to convince people what have happened and who is to blame. Present directed rhetoric is an attempt to convince on what is happening here and now and what we should feel and think about it. It is about creating a common understanding of the situation. Future directed rhetoric is an attempt to convince that something is right to do or mean (Johannessen et al., 2018: 186-193).

Ethos, pathos, and logos are called rhetorical appeals since it is different ways a speaker appeals to their audience. Ethos is the appeal to the speaker's credibility, pathos is the appeal to the audience's emotions, and logos is the appeal to the audience's reason in the form of factual reasoning (Aristoteles & Eide, 2006: 8-9). When we ask if an utterance is convincing, we are asking if it has appeal. It has appeal if we trust the speaker, care and accept the utterance (Johannessen et al., 2018: 186-193). There are many interesting aspects of rhetorical analysis which would also be relevant when analyzing Thunberg's speeches. Looking into body language and tone would be interesting in a later research but is not the focus in this thesis. One of the questions I asked myself when I started this, was why people are listening to her facts, when the facts are not hers, but have existed for decades. Rhetorical appeals can contribute to a greater understanding of her success.

#### **Ethos – appeal to the speaker's credibility**

Ethos is the appeal to the speaker's credibility and character, and if the speaker appears to be someone we can trust (Baumlin & Meyer, 2018). Not the speaker's actual character, but how she appears and the impression the audience have and gets from her. We cannot say anything for certain since rhetoric is about probabilities, and therefore we must trust the speaker, and thus the audience is influenced by the speakers character (Kjeldsen, 2006: 116-117). Authenticity is an important dimension of credibility, so that the audience perceive the speaker as 'truly themselves'. By showing personal engagement the speaker can be perceived as honest and engaged in the cause. One must appear consistent over time to have authenticity (Kjeldsen, 2006: 123). By looking at the performance of the rhetorical utterance we look for signs such as if the speaker seems secure, if she shakes or sweats, if she cries and if she should cry. It is important that the performance or text is suitable in relation to the utterance. It is relevant to look at how the speaker is staging themselves and where the utterance takes place, which can influence the audience's trust. The speaker's reputation and position are as important as the performance. Ethos is very much based on the impression the audience already has.

Being in the right or wrong position such as profession, education, gender and age category can influence if the speaker is perceived as believable and trustworthy (Johannessen et al., 2018: 194-196). It is important to understand the speaker's role repertoire and what these roles include. Roles are social positions with expectations connected to them (Johannessen et al., 2018:220-226). To communicate sustainability, it is important that the spokesperson has credibility in the audience. It is important that she has true engagement in the cause, and it is important that the spokesperson is unique enough that she cannot be replaced, or that the opposite side has a similar spokesperson. The audience must feel like the spokesperson is like them (Arnslett et al., 2018). The more credible sources the speaker uses, the more likely it is that the speaker themselves will be perceived as credible (Kjeldsen, 2006: 125-133). Thunberg is a student, a girl, a daughter, a big sister, a person with Asperger's and a climate activist. As will be argued in the analysis, who she is both strengthens and weakens some of her frames.

#### Pathos – the appeal to the audience's emotions

Ethos and pathos have some similarities since the performance is important. Pathos is the appeal to the emotions the rhetorical utterance evokes amongst the audience. Emotions are influencing our perceptions and decisions and can therefore be vital to whether or not we succeed in the persuasion. One must awaken the engagement so that the audience care of what is being said. We cannot however always be in charge of ours or other's emotions. Fear is one of the easiest emotions to appeal to, and the speaker can present it as they are the only one with the solution to avoid the fearful situation. But fear can also make us feel powerless and paralyzed which has been a dilemma for the climate movement (Johannessen et al., 2018: 197-199). This can for instance be the case for those believing in the climate apocalypse imaginary, framing the climate as a catastrophe. If they go too far describing the seriousness in the climate changes and what this demand from us to succeed in lowering the risks, many people might give up and turn their back on them, using the doom barrier.

We are always in a certain cultural and historic context and attempts of convincing never happens in a vacuum. Every rhetorical analysis must look at the rhetorical utterances in the context they are uttered in. Where and when it is and who is present is the small rhetorical situation and is important for the appeal to the audience's emotions. Both as a premise and as a resource for the speaker. Some moods almost come naturally if you are in the right place at the right time, such as a wedding or a football stadium. In some situations, we are already moved, like after a terror attack. This mood can be used to form a message with that in mind.

When looking at how the speaker appeals to the audience's emotions, we must think of the historical and cultural context as well, known as the wide rhetorical situation (L. E. F. Johannessen et al., 2018: 199-200). Chapter 2.0. was a presentation of the wide rhetorical situation. Different perspectives on sustainability, the historical development of sustainability and the different reports, goals, and agreements. The small rhetorical situation of this thesis is where Thunberg is speaking, which is at summits and strikes.

### Logos – the appeal to the audience's reason

Logos is the appeal to the reason through factual reasoning and looks at if the arguments are convincing. Logos is therefore closely connected to the utterance, but not very connected to how it is performed, in contradiction from ethos and pathos. When looking at logos we ask how the speaker's arguments are structured and build. There are two central aspects: what are the central claims and what reasons are meant to legitimize them. It is the relation between the legitimations and the claims that are meant to appeal to the audience's reason (L. E. F. Johannessen et al., 2018: 200- 202). The linguists Theodor Jacob Van Leeuwen Ruth Wodak presents four forms of legitimation: (i) Authorization, (ii) rationalization, (iii) moral evaluation and (iii) mythopoesis. (i) Authorization legitimation is to legitimize a statement by referring to authority. These can be connected to traditions, laws or people who have institutional authority, such as a teacher or an expert. (ii) Rationalization legitimation is referring to the utility of the social practice or a theoretical rationalization by using 'common sense' or referring to specialists, such as climate experts. Utterances from experts get high status since they are accepted as relevant within the given context. Referring to experts can increase ethos, as explained earlier. (iii) Moral evaluations refer to specific value systems which offers a moral foundation for legitimation. The argument seems to be a description of what is happening rather than an explicitly formulated legitimacy argument. This makes it one of the least explicit forms of legitimation. By linking an activity to a discourse of values, it gets moralized. The moral evaluations are connected to imaginaries and legitimizing by using moral evaluation which refers to the values and beliefs in the imaginary. (iiii) Mythopoesis is legitimation through telling stories. Negative stories are functionalized this way, and positive stories are an exception. In moral tales the hero is rewarded for following socially legitimate practices with a happy ending. In cautionary tales the hero gets an unhappy ending for engaging in socially deviant behaviour (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999: 104-110).

Often, it is only the implicit reasons that appeal to reason. Hidden behind the utterances are divided perceptions on how the world is or should be which is the imaginaries explained earlier. These perceptions are important to look at to understand the speaker's appeal to reason. The underlying taken-for-granted-truths holds the argumentation together and makes it logical (Johannessen et al., 2018: 200- 202). By looking at the legitimation and the reasoning, we are trying to find the pragmatic intent. The pragmatic intent is what the speaker is trying to accomplish. E.g. a salesman's speech often has the goal of selling a product. His words can be interpreted with that in mind, depending on the listeners' sensitivity or lack thereof for the salesman's pragmatic intent (Johnston, 1995: 227-228).

#### Topos - common ground

With all the different imaginaries, frames, and rhetorical appeals, finding a common ground, called topos can be hard but important to get the point across. The foundation and premise of the argument can be vital for the impact the speaker has to the audience. Even though the premises are common views shared by the audience, they do not convince by themselves. They must be put in a logical connection with the speaker's claims and reasons (Kjeldsen, 2006: 157). By establishing a common ground with the audience, it will be easier to lead them to the speaker's argumentation and view. By creating a common ground by using values, feelings and experiences the speaker can create an emotional bond to its audience. As described in this chapter, language is important to communicate imaginaries, express values, and someone's point of view. One can use different rhetorical appeals and strategies to legitimize arguments. How Thunberg does this, will be explored in the analysis.

### 4.3. Research quality

The question of validity and reliability will always be important for the quality of a research. Validity is if the researcher examines the questions asked in the study. The term refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of the research project. The researcher's interpretations are valid when they are based on the research material in a trustworthy way (Peräkylä, 2016). The challenge with validity arises since the researcher is on two levels, both the theoretical level when formulating research questions and interpret the results of an empirical research, and on the empirical level when collecting and analysing data. Ideally the same terms should be used on the two levels (Halvorsen, 2008: 67). Reliability refers to the trustworthiness of the measurements. High reliability is having an as accurate process as possible so that others can conclude with the same results (Ringdal, 2013: 96; Halvorsen, 2008: 68).

The generalization is limited in case studies which is the study of an individual case (Peräkylä, 2016) such as this research where the research material is not a random selection. It is only Thunberg's speeches, from little over one year. Still, case studies can lead to generalisation of theoretical concepts and observations about general processes (Riessman, 2016: 365). Critical discourse researchers try to make their positions explicit, be self-reflective about the process and explain the methods used (Unger et al., 2016: 278). The researcher is influenced by social, economic and political relations. The analysis can be verified, by seeing which terms and tools has been used for what purposes (Skrede, 2017: 158-160).

Thunberg's speeches existed independently of the researcher's intervention and is publicly available. By only using the complete speeches, without editing increases the reliability since it is easy to access the same research material. Some of the speeches have used different angles, and switches between them, but it seems to not have been edited. Analyzing videotaped speeches, increases the validity of this research since the speeches were transcribed and looked at several times during the research, both the transcriptions and the videotaped speeches. Other researchers can look at the same material. I use some longer quotes in addition to paraphrasing to try not to influence the research material too much in the presentation in the analysis. When paraphrasing, I still try to use her words, terms and phrasings as much as I can. It would have been good to have been at strikes physically, as well as using the recorded material. There is always a risk that the speeches can be removed from the internet. During the last days writing this thesis the Fridays For Future homepage was changed, and some of the videotaped speeches were removed or there were other tapings of the speeches than I primarily used. I did change the time stamps and references on those who were changed, but there is a risk that this can happen again.

The rules for the how's and why's of speech are mostly understood by the speakers and the listeners, and outsiders may not understand them. This can be a problem for social researchers, when they try to do a research, but do not have the tacit knowledge needed to understand it completely (Johnston, 1995: 222-223). I am an environmentalist and has been to different demonstrations and is therefore somewhat an 'insider'. However, I have only been to three Fridays for future-events and have never been to global summits on climate. Even though I might have a deeper understanding on this movement and the topic, there is still a risk that I am not being of everything and can overlook details. Thunberg is sometimes very explicit in her statements, which makes it easier to assume that others would have come to the same results.

Still, there are assumptions made and conclusions drawn in this thesis based on what the researcher assumes is the implicit message or Thunberg's intentions. The findings are connected to the theories presented, and the terms used in the theory and method are used in the analysis to have coherence. However, this research defines five frames. These are named, categorized, and defined by the researcher. It is plausible that another researcher would categorize them differently. Some aspects of the frames overlap, and it is therefore plausible that other researchers might move some aspects from one frame to another or emphasize different aspects as more important than this thesis concludes.

#### 4.4. Approach and sample

This research looks at 13 of her speeches during the fall of 2018, until January 2020. She held more speeches during this time, but after analyzing the 13 speeches, the research material got repetitive and did not add any new findings since she often uses the same frames. She writes the speeches herself but gets feedback by scientists on the climate facts (Skavlan, 2019b).

The speeches are divided into two groups: the ones where she speaks at WEF, COP, or UN summits, and when she speaks at strikes. The first group will be referred to as *summits* and the second as *strikes*. The summits includes her speeches at: COP 24 in Katowice December 2018, Davos WEF (World Economic Forum) January 2019, Brussels EESC (European Economic and Social Committee) February 2019, the EU Parliament in Strasburg in April 2019, the Houses of Parliament in the UK in April 2019, the Paris National Assembly in July 2019, the New York UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019, COP 25 in Madrid December 2019 and WEF in Davos in January 2020. The strikes include her speech in Montreal in September 2019, Vancouver in October 2019, and Edmonton in October 2019. These are all in a short period of time, and in North America. The speeches published from strikes during the spring of 2019 are incomplete. There are some video clips of parts of the speeches, which was not ideal and therefore not used in this thesis. Since she often uses the same frames, I assume that she did that in the spring of 2019 as well, but I cannot be completely sure. I also included a short video she released a couple of days before she spoke at WEF in Davos in January 2019. She speaks into the camera, with no audience present. This was included since it is a concrete challenge to the companies and decision makers, so she is clear on what she wants. In total, I use 14 videos of her to identify frames, 10 of them are speeches at summits, 3 are speeches at strikes and 1 is a videotaped challenge to the world leaders. Her TEDx Talk-speech and interviews are used for context information, and information about her.

Even though she uses a lot of the same frames in her TEDx Talk, she speaks a lot of how she became interested in the climate, and it is therefore used for context. The speeches were found at the Fridays For Future homepage and Youtube. Some of the speeches were available as texts as well but was transcribed to get an accurate transcription. By the end of my work with the analysis, I came across a speech at a Swedish strike (NRK, 2019). This was compared to the other speeches. The speech uses the same frames and did not add anything new, except from confirming that it does not matter if it is in Swedish or English. The speeches were compared to see if they contained all frames identified and looked to see if there were differences or similarities in the speeches.



## 5.0. Analysis - How dare you!

The previous chapters focused on who Greta Thunberg is, the political context, perspectives on sustainability, imaginaries, frames, mental barriers, and charismatic leadership. Critical discourse analysis and rhetorical appeals were presented, and in the following, the analysis of her frames will be explored. First there will be a short presentation of who the audience is, followed by a presentation of the frames she uses in her speeches which is the main goal of this thesis. Then there will be a presentation of the mental barriers connected to her message before her rhetorical appeals and qualities of charismatic leadership will be discussed.

### 5.1. The audience

The audience of her speeches is not just the people present in the room. The speeches are published online, and the whole speech or short pieces of them are spread in social media and in the news. Her speeches are 'twitter friendly' since a few sentences often become catchphrases or is enough to demonstrate a statement and it is spread on social media. It is doubtful that they are made by her or anyone connected to her since she does not share these in her social media. On her social media she mostly shares pictures of herself with her climate strike sign and how many weeks she has been striking, updates on when and where she will be striking, climate speeches, and some articles and videos on climate. She has as of April 2020 almost 3,1 million followers on Facebook (@GretaThunbergSweden, 2020), and 4,1 followers on Twitter (@GretaThunberg, 2020). Her audience therefore expands beyond who is present in the room of the time of the speech. People who are not following her on social media can also be the audience, and her speeches are often in the news. Then it is usually short pieces of her speeches.

The symbolic effect that she is being invited to speech at the UN, EU and WEF is big and increases her ethos. This gives her more power since it shows that she is being taken seriously by being invited and being heard. When she is speaking at the same places as some of the world's most powerful, she is seen as an equal by speaking at the same place which increases her credibility.

### 5.2. Frames

This research has identified and defined five key frames Thunberg uses in her speeches. This is the main findings of this research. They are the moral prophet frame, generational justice frame, power shift frame, empty rhetoric frame, and the scientific frame. A short presentation of these frames will be presented in the following before they are explored more thoroughly in the rest of this chapter. She often says 'leaders', 'decision makers' and 'those in power'. She aims at those who have decision-making power in governments, organisations, banks, and the media.

In this thesis, these will be referred to as 'leaders'. Every frame will be presented with a quote that is describing of the frame. Some of the frames are closely connected, so there will be overlaps. This was necessary to be able to present it as thoroughly as possible. This research cannot conclude if these frames are used intentionally by Thunberg. The aim is to identify and analyse frames in her speeches.

### 1. The moral prophet frame

Thunberg is presenting and defining what she believes is morally acceptable political prioritization. She says that fighting the climate changes and creating a broad public awareness is the most important thing to do. She wants them to panic and act according to the crisis we are facing if we are to save the future from irreversible chain reactions and destruction in time. She often says that the leaders have a choice, and they are currently choosing to fail. She says that it is wrong that she is up there, cleaning up their mess, and asks them if they do not feel anger. She tries to convince the audience of what is right and wrong.

### 2. The generational justice frame

This frame consists of her blaming the leaders for taking the future away from the children by making unsustainable choices. She asks to be a child again and not clean up the leaders' mess. She brings up not only her and the school strikers, but the leaders' children and grandchildren. Within this frame, she is emotional. She gets emotional when talking about the destructions of climate change, and that she should be back in school, not speaking at summits. Again, she is trying to convince of what is right and wrong.

### 3. The power shift frame

Within this frame, she is shifting the power balance. She is calling the ones in power irresponsible children and that they have not done their homework, so they do not understand the crisis. She blames them of being afraid of being unpopular, and therefore not addressing climate change. She is telling them that every political party and the media has failed, but that people have not failed, and people are powerful. The system has failed, so they must change the system. Within this frame, she is speaking to the ones in power as if she were their parent.

#### 4. The empty rhetoric frame

Within this frame she is accusing the leaders for using empty words. Words that does not really mean anything and therefore are misleading and calming people down since they are giving the impression that something is being done when nothing is really being done. She says that this is not the time to come up with vague and distant goals, we must speak in black and white.

#### 5. The scientific frame

This is the frame where she speaks of the science behind climate change. She is referring to the Paris Agreement and the IPCC report. She asks them to listen to the scientists, since she is just repeating what they have said for a long time.

##### 5.2.1. Moral prophet frame

*“Solving the climate crisis is the greatest and most complex challenge that Homo sapiens has.. have ever faced” (Facing Future, 2019, 2:07).*

As mentioned, many debates, including the climate debate, can be characterized by an attempt of definition power. Thunberg tries to define the climate crisis as the biggest challenge today. She claims that the most important thing to do, is to establish a wide public understanding and awareness of our carbon budget. This carbon budget must become a new global currency in the heart of present and future economics (Facing Future, 2019). If the people are not aware, they cannot put pressure on the leaders to act and fix the climate crisis. Leaders can get away with doing nothing if they are not pressured by the people (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). She is making a moral evaluation of what is the most important issue and what we must do. She often brings up the power of the people which will be explained further in the power shift frame. The reason for why it is vital that we establish a broad public awareness is so that the people can put pressure on the leaders so that they do what is right, and therefore it is important to mention this within this frame.

She claims that the leaders' plans are insufficient (see e.g. CBS News, 2019a) and that the UK current support of new exploitation of fossil fuels are beyond absurd (WWF UK, 2019). She defines the path we are on now is a 'road of madness' (FridaysForFuture, 2018) and it is shameful that they have ignored the crisis for so long (CBS News, 2019b). All our progress and achievements will have been for nothing if we do not focus every inch of our being on climate change (FridaysForFuture, 2019c). Here, she says that what they are doing is not good enough, defining what is the morally correct thing to do. She calls the UK's plans 'beyond absurd' and that the path we are on now is a 'road of madness'.

She uses rationalization legitimization by calling something mad and absurd. It would be common sense not to go on a road of madness, and therefore the actions of the leaders do not make sense.

She accuses the leaders of stealing her present and future by only focusing on money (see e.g. PBS NewsHour, 2019). “Some people say that we are fighting for our future, but that is not true. We are not fighting for our future, we are fighting for everyone's future” (FridaysForFuture, 2019c, 6:40). She constantly says that the climate crisis will affect everyone, not just focusing on herself. The school strikers will not be bystanders in this climate emergency and will therefore be able to look their future children in their eyes and say that they did everything they could. That is their moral duty and they will never stop fighting for a safe future. They will do everything they can to stop the crisis for getting even worse, since this is the most important thing (CBS News, 2019a). She asks them to be on the right side of history, pledging to do everything in their power to stay below 1.5 degree doing whatever it takes (FridaysForFuture, 2019b). She here explicitly says that their moral duty is to do everything they can to stop climate change. Their actions now will have long-term consequences, and they have a moral duty of doing what they can to fight for a safe future for the current and future generations. When saying the ‘right side’ of history, she is also defining a ‘wrong side’. When the right side is her side with climate change as the focus, the wrong side would be the side that does not prioritize sustainability, which can also be the road of madness described earlier.

The popular idea of cutting our emissions in half in 10 years only gives us a 50 percent chance of staying below 1.5 degrees [Celsius] and the risk of setting off irreversible chain reactions beyond human control. Fifty percent may be acceptable to you, but those numbers do not include tipping points, most feedback loops, additional warming hidden by toxic air pollution, or the aspects of equity and climate justice. They also rely on my generation sucking hundreds of billions of tons of your CO<sub>2</sub> out of the air with technologies that barely exist. So, a 50 percent risk is simply not acceptable to us—we who have to live with the consequences (PBS NewsHour, 2019, 1:40).

“Why should we accept taking that risk, leaving the future living conditions for humankind to a 50/50 flip of a coin?” (Thunberg, 2019, 5:30). She explains what she will accept and not, and that what the leaders are doing is not good enough for them. She asks the leaders why they would accept this. She is legitimizing her argument by rationalization. She simplifies it by asking why a flip of a coin should decide if they have a future or not. This rhetoric will be explored more thoroughly in the empty rhetoric frame, where she often says we must speak in clear terms and black or white.

She says that people are always telling her and the other millions of school strikers that they have accomplished a lot and therefore should be proud of themselves. But this should not be our focus. We should only focus on the emission curve. She accuses them of not listening to science since they are just interested in solution that will enable them to carry on like before (WWF UK, 2019). She criticizes them for speaking of green eternal economic growth since they are afraid of being unpopular (Thunberg, 2018). She asks the ones in power to stop competing and rather cooperate to share the resources fairly and sustainably to protect the biosphere and everything in it (FridaysForFuture, 2019c). These examples show that she does not care about popularity. She says that the focus should not be that the school strikers have accomplished a lot, or that some politicians rather focus on what makes them popular. The emission curve should be the only focus. People should listen to science, not focusing on finding solutions that makes them carry on like before, because that was not good enough. We cannot compete, we must cooperate. That is the only way to protect us from climate change. She is not only defining climate change as the most important issue; she also defines the solutions. However, the solution she mentions here are not concrete and specific solutions, they are more general. Such as in the following when she criticizes capitalism.

Thunberg criticizes the financially fortunate for focusing on their luxury and their right to carry on with business as usual. This is accelerating disastrous trends such as deforestation, toxic air pollution and erosion. She criticizes them for relying on the market to solve everything, focusing on small solutions to isolated issues (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). She criticizes them for focusing on money and that our civilization is being sacrificed so that some people can make enormous amounts of money. The sufferings of the many are paying for the luxury of the few (see e.g. Thunberg, 2018). She uses terms like ‘fairy tales of eternal economic growth’ while getting emotional at the NY UN summit, and asks them how they dare to focus on money with an angry and emotional voice (PBS NewsHour, 2019). She says that the focus on money causes sufferings and destruction. She wants them to see the whole picture, not focus on isolated problems. This is connected to the sustainable lifestyle imaginary which focuses on ethical, individual choices as the solution. She frames the issue as a lifestyle issue, and that the focus on luxury and money is morally wrong since it causes sufferings and destruction. She says that we should measure our wealth and success in the greenhouse gas emission graph, not the curve of economic growth. The carbon budget must be included (WWF UK, 2019). She claims that from a sustainability perspective, all political ideologies have failed, so it is not about party politics (Guardian News, 2020).

Even though she says that this is not about party politics, she has a more socialist view, since she is speaking of equity and criticising capitalism by saying that we should not focus on money and the market. She never mentions capitalism, but criticises its core values of competition, market, and money. She does not only challenge the illusion that growth is the answer and solution, she is challenging the neoliberal project in general when she says that markets cannot give us the solutions to the climate crisis. As described, focusing on greed, rich and poor, and capitalism which implies quick and radical changes, these are often associated with the left side of the political spectrum, and in conflict with the values on the right side. She threatens the status quo and criticise the luxurious lifestyle which is associated with the ‘freedom to enjoy life’. For those, the climate solutions of increased state control fit poorly with their values. Conservative values such as tradition, responsibility, patriotism, and possibility work better, but this is not what she is promoting. She says that it is not about party politics, however, she is speaking more in line with the values on the left side of the political spectrum.

#### Treat it like a crisis

Thunberg says that we must treat the climate crisis as a crisis to be able to solve it (see e.g. Thunberg, 2019). She claims that the climate crisis has never been treated like a crisis, and therefore people are not aware of the consequences of their everyday lives, and this needs to change today (Facing Future, 2019). People cannot understand that we are facing a real crisis without the sense of urgency. Because in an emergency, you change your behavior. She has been criticized for telling people to panic. She agrees that telling people to panic unless you have to is a terrible idea, but facing the crisis we now do requires some level of panic (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). When addressing that some say that telling people to panic is a bad idea, she shows that she is aware of the critiques, she just does not think they are valid. This increases her power, since she shows that she knows, but disagrees. If she had never addressed the critiques, it might have strengthened the critiques, and people could say that she does not realize this or that. She lets people know that she knows but does not approve of the critiques. Saying that we should panic and that this is a crisis is in line with the climate apocalypse imaginary. She paints a picture of an awaiting catastrophe, and we must panic now. This framing of the issue as a catastrophe is one of the most used frames in the media, but also the one that can lead to people feeling helpless and avoids it. When people are told over and over that doomsday is coming, they get immune. Still, this has worked for Thunberg. One reason might be because she is making it understandable and comparing it to more relatable situations.

If a child were standing in the road with cars driving at full speed, you would not look away just because it is uncomfortable, you would run out to save that child (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). In this example, she says that we must act the same. A child is helpless with a big threat coming at it at full speed, leading to a disaster. This is what we are facing now as well. The ones who can help avoiding this crisis must do it, since the child does not have the power to get out of the situation. The child needs help, and standing on the side, choosing not to help while you could, is not rational behaviour. This comparison has many aspects. First, the child is helpless, and looking away while being able to help would be morally wrong. Most people would agree on that. When it comes to climate change, the children and future generations are seemingly helpless, and the ones that will be affected the most. The leaders can help. Now, they are looking away, while being able to help, and rather making the situation worse. As mentioned, most people would agree that this is wrong in the example of the child in the road. So why is it more acceptable when speaking of climate change? This is a new and ‘abstract’ crisis. It is easier to understand the scenario with the child, since most people have been in that situation before, and it is more concrete. This is what Beck et al. described as observable and non-observable risks. It is an observable threat and an observable victim with a short time frame. The car is coming and will kill or injure the child in a short amount of time. The climate changes seem more abstract and distant. By making this comparison, she makes climate change closer and more concrete. If the person that could rescue chose not to, that person would be the observable villain, in addition to the person in the car off course. The climate crisis is non-observable, and therefore the victims and the villains are also non-observable since the threat might not be seen as a real threat. As previously described, she is saying that creating a broad public awareness is vital. The people would be the ones standing too far away, seeing the leader being able to help the child on the road. If they see that the leader does not help while being able to, they can either try to make the leader save the child by letting her know what they want her to do, or blame her for not doing enough, so that she will act the next time. Or the people can make sure that she is no longer in the position to help the child and replace her with someone that will save the child. Thunberg is with this comparison making the issue more understandable, and at the same time defining what the right thing to do is. She is saying ‘you would run out and save that child’, telling them that this is what everyone would do, since that is rational and common sense, not standing on the side looking away because it is too uncomfortable. This is legitimizing by rationalization. It would be rational to save that child, so therefore it is rational to act sustainably to avoid disaster.

She also makes another more famous comparison. She says that she wants us to panic and act as if our house was on fire. Keeping your house from burning to the ground, requires some level of panic. The leaders must act as if our house was falling apart, because now they are not. They would not go on like before, or say that they have the situations under control, when they rely on inventions that do not exist. If the walls started to tumble down, they would set their differences aside and start to cooperate. Our house is falling apart, and we do not have much time. Yet, nothing is being done. We must act as if our house is on fire (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). By comparing the world with our house, she makes the climate changes closer and more concrete. It is easier to relate to our house burning down, than saying that there is a lot of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere which is more abstract and non-observable. Saying that our house is on fire is in line with the frame presented as the ‘insurance and military framing’ since many buy house insurances just in case something happens to the house. Paying for insurance today would be a way of acting early to prevent a catastrophe. It is also in line with the readiness framing, where we should prepare ourselves and be ready if something happens. Saying that our house is already on fire is an implication that this as well is too late which can activate the doom barrier. We should have insured us; we should have been ready. Even though she says that we should panic, and that this is happening now, she says that if we behave as if we are in an emergency, we can avoid climate and ecological breakdown. But that we must start today since the opportunity to avoid the breakdown will not last for long. So we have no more excuses to avoid it (WWF UK, 2019). She makes the facts closer and simpler by using the metaphor of the house. Even though the talk of crisis and catastrophe is in line with the climate apocalypse imaginary which can activate the doom barrier and making people feel hopeless, she says that we do have time. This aspect of hope will be discussed further in the power shift frame when speaking of people having power.

### Responsibility

How do you react to these numbers [about climate change from the IPCC report] without feeling at least some level of panic? How do you respond to the fact that basically nothing is being done about this, without feeling the slightest bit of anger? And how do you communicate this without sounding alarmist? I would really like to know (Extinction Rebellion, 2019, 4:22).

She claims that their inactions are fueling the flames by the hour (Guardian News, 2020) and blames them for being responsible of making this crisis worse than it would have been if they had acted in time. She says that it is wrong that she is up there speaking. She should be back in school (PBS NewsHour, 2019). However, someone needs to do it, even though it should not be up to the school strikers to take the responsibility.



They often hear that they should not worry, but the leaders have not done their job. They did not act in time, so now the crisis is even bigger than it would have been if they started treating it like a crisis before (CBS News, 2019a).

The leaders have not done what they should have done, and now she must be across the world speaking at the summit in New York instead of being back in school, as normal 16-year-olds would be. She asks them if they regret doing nothing. They are responsible, and she does not understand how they do not feel anger about their inactions. She does not understand how they are not regretful since their actions are making the crisis worse. She defines who are responsible for the crisis and that the responsibility should not be on some people. The responsibility must include everyone and everything (Thunberg, 2019). Everyone and everything must change. But the bigger your platform, the bigger your responsibility. The bigger your carbon footprint, the bigger your moral duty (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). Even though everyone is responsible and must change to be able to change the unsustainable path we are on, some are more responsible than others, because some have a bigger opportunity to make changes. If you have a big platform, you have a bigger responsibility, and if you have a big carbon footprint, the moral duty is bigger. She argues that people are using the question of responsibility into a strategy. She criticizes those saying that the climate crisis is something the activists have created, but that this is a convenient lie since no one can be blamed if everyone is guilty. And someone is to blame she says. Some people, some decision makers and some companies have known that they are sacrificing priceless values to continue making money (FridaysForFuture, 2019b). she asks how we can expect poorer countries to care about the climate crisis, if we who have everything do not care at all about our commitments to the Paris agreement (FridaysForFuture, 2018). She says that some has more work to do than others and presents numbers on how much have been invested in fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement, and how some companies and the G20 countries are responsible for most of the emissions (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). She shows that she understand that there is no 'one fits all'-solution when she speaks of equity and that the richer countries must get to zero emissions faster so that the poorer countries can build infrastructure we already have, provide clean drinking water and heighten their standard of living (see e.g. Thunberg, 2019). Using the terminology and values associated with the left side and contradicts the values on the right side of the political spectrum. It seems like she contradicts herself when she says that everyone must be included in the responsibility, but that some are more responsible than others. I understand this as everyone must change, but some has a bigger opportunity to change, and therefore a bigger responsibility to change.

While speaking of equity, she says that the poorer countries must have the opportunity to heighten their living standards, and the rich countries must take the responsibility of reaching zero emissions and help poorer countries to do the same. The richer part of the world is responsible for most of the climate destruction due to their way of life, so they must take the lead on fighting climate change. Since she often says that climate is black or white as I will explain further in the empty rhetoric frame, it is interesting that she does focus a lot on the aspect of equity. She does not claim that everyone should get to zero emissions now. She acknowledges that everyone cannot get to zero emissions and that the issues and solutions are complex. The poorer countries must get the chance to improve their living standards even though this demands greenhouse gas emissions. She puts the responsibility on the financially fortunate, the powerful and those with a big platform and big carbon footprint. Some can choose sustainability, which will be explain in the following.

### Choice

The main solution [to the climate crisis] is so simple that even a small child can understand it. We have to stop the emissions of greenhouse gases. And either we do that or we don't. You say nothing in life is black or white but that is a lie, a very dangerous lie. Either we prevent a 1.5 degree of warming or we don't. Either we avoid setting off that irreversible chain reaction beyond the human control, or we don't. Either we choose to go on as a civilization or we don't. That is as black or white as it gets. There are no gray areas when it comes to survival. Now we all have a choice. We can create transformational action that will safeguard the future living conditions for humankind, or we can continue with our business as usual and fail. That is up to you and me (#FridaysForFuture, 2019, 2:17).

She is not saying that everyone should try as best as they can, and that we can be happy with the outcome either way. She shows that she knows that we have a choice, and by saying this, we know that the people in power also knows. If they did not know before, they know now, since she has informed them. They can be held accountable since they are choosing to fail, and therefore are the responsible ones. This goes after the feeling and excuse of helplessness. They are making an active choice of not doing anything, and therefore choosing to fail, having the opportunity to turn this around. They chose to not act according to the best available science and their own commitments.

“[The] world, in case you haven't noticed, is currently on fire [...]. Our house is still on fire. Your inaction is fueling the flames by the hour. And we are telling you to act as if you loved your children above all else” (Guardian News, 2020, 9:53). She brings in the children and the house that is *still* on fire. They not only ignore it; they fuel the flames by choosing not to act, contributing to making the crisis worse. The massive forest fires in Australia at that time made this picture even more impactful, since it made it more current and therefore closer.

She took advantage of the mood the audience was in, which could have influenced her pathos, appeal to the audience's emotions. Most people would agree that it is a tragedy that the forest fires in Australia led to so much destruction. When she says that their inaction is fueling the flames, it brings it closer, since the flames are observable and concrete at that moment. She says that the world is currently on fire. Not just 'a part of Australia'. This makes the fires apply to everyone since it is 'the world' and everyone lives in the world and therefore it applies to everyone. It can also be a more general statement, that it is not just the fires in Australia she is referring to. She has said that our house is on fire before, implying that 'our house' is the world, and that the fires are the climate changes and destructions that we can see some places, but that other places are more non-observable. She is also challenging the distance barrier since she brings it closer both in time ('currently') and space ('the world'). However, saying 'world' can also make it seem far away, since it is 'abstract'. Yes, everyone lives in the world, but it is still not as close as your neighborhood for example. This statement of 'the world, in case you haven't noticed, is currently on fire' is more impactful due to the timing. She can say this at other times, and most would understand what she is referring to since she has spoken of the house on fire before. However, by saying this at the time where the Australian fires were in the news makes it closer and more impactful, and it had been in the news for quite some time. She has used some other current events in her speeches. She had already said 'our house is on fire' and this was one of her most famous phrases, but when Notre Dame was on fire, these words were even more impactful when she held a speech in Brussels the day after the fires. Using an example like this, could increase her pathos since people were still affected by the news of Notre Dame. The fact that it happened the day before and that she had said our house is on fire before all contributed to making this comparison more impactful. If she had not said that our house is on fire before, it might have seemed insensitive that she would 'use' a tragedy like the burning of Notre Dame for her own cause. Having said those words before, might have increased the impact of this statement. She also said that the world 'in case you haven't noticed' is currently on fire when the Australian fires were destroying big parts of Australia and they still did not have it completely under control. The audience might already be in a mood of the feeling of destruction and tragedy of the loss of nature. This could contribute to an increased appeal to the audience's emotion when she said it. It was hard to ignore the Australian fires, and she tries to make it evident that it should be impossible to ignore that the world is on fire due to climate change as well. These examples were current examples that might bring climate change closer to the audience, both in time since it was happening right then, and in a spatial dimension.

Notre Dame is very known, and even though Australia is on the other side of the world from where she was speaking, it is still very similar to the western European countries and the U.S. Australia in a sense is more alike those countries and therefore more relatable than e.g. Nicaragua or Tanzania. This is all a part of the rhetorical situation and made the utterance more impactful. This utterance can of course also be impactful in other parts of the world. However, she has traveled in mostly western, rich countries to hold speeches, and she is from a rich, western country as well. Therefore, I mention that Australia and Notre Dame seems closer to the audience, since Australia is similar in many ways to countries in the west, and Notre Dame is in France which is a western country. The speech she held the day after the fires in Notre Dame was in Brussels, which is on the border of France. The audience, as mentioned, is people around the world since the speeches are spread on social media.

Within the moral prophet frame, she is trying to convince people of what has happened and who is to blame which is the past directed rhetoric. She attempts to convince on what is happening now and what we should feel and think about it, creating a common understanding of the situation which is the present directed rhetoric and topos. She also tries to convince that something is right to do or mean, referred to earlier as future directed rhetoric. This is all about which imaginary she believes in and tries to communicate through frames. As mentioned, framing has four important functions: defining the problem (climate crisis), interpret the causes (focus on money and lack of focus on climate change), a moral evaluation (it is wrong, mad and beyond absurd) and a recommendation on how the problem should be treated (cut emissions). She puts alternatives against each other, such as choosing to go on as a civilization or not, that this is up to you and me. Implying that the right answer is to go on as a civilization when she paints a picture of the right side and the wrong side. Saying 'how dare you', she implies that they have done something when the alternative was the right thing to do. She is not saying 'well I wouldn't have chosen it, but it is up to you' or something similar, she is saying 'how dare you'. Not only implying that there was a right thing to do which they chose not to do, but that this is so outrageous that they had to 'dare' to do it. Not just choose it, but that it needed to be dared to do. The effect of shaming people and referring to the guilt has caused disagreement, as mentioned. Thunberg's moral prophet frame is in short telling them what she thinks is morally acceptable, and not acting accordingly is wrong. Ergo, shaming them if they are not doing what is morally acceptable. She uses shaming, but not to those who now have started to act. She has managed to activate more people to *contribute* to the shaming of the leaders by striking. Therefore, I will not conclude that shaming people leads to them acting.

Said in other words: if A (Thunberg) shames, B (the leaders), this does not seem to activate B. If A shames, B, this might activate C (the people) to help A shame B. If A and C go together, this might lead to change due to the power of the many. However, we have not seen much change yet. Shaming the leaders can activate the people to join the shaming of the leaders, even though this might not lead to the leaders changing. By creating the movement and having many followers, she has created a 'watchdog' in the movement. This social pressure might lead to change. This will be explored more in the power shift frame, where she speaks of people having power.

Thunberg is trying to create topos, a common ground, by saying what is morally acceptable and not. We should not accept anything else than sustainable actions. The reasoning behind establishing sustainability as the current most important focus, is that we are currently in a crisis that will get worse. It is affecting many and will affect many more in the years to come. Some are more responsible, and some must get the chance to heighten their living standards. We can still choose to do what is right. She simplifies and use metaphors like 'our house is on fire', that we would save a child on the road and act as if we are in an emergency to make the comparison to what is happening now. 'Everyone' would agree that choosing not to save a child from getting hit in the road by a car, would be unacceptable, and that you would change your behavior if your house was on fire. Coming up with these examples that most can relate to, and most would agree on, before comparing it to the climate crisis we are currently in, brings the climate crisis closer to us and makes it more understandable. She builds her arguments on examples that 'everyone' agrees on. Following her line of argumentation, it would only be sensible and logical to act sustainably as well, since that would be within the same logic as saving that child. She is legitimizing her rhetorical utterance by rationalization and implies that it is common sense to save the child, and it is common sense to make sustainable priorities. Saying that people are suffering so that the financially fortunate can live in luxury is also a way of saying that it is common sense not wanting luxury if this is at the expense of destructions and sufferings. Many can agree that it is nice to be rich, and many agrees that suffering is bad. However, being rich at the expense of others seems to be harder to acknowledge as unfair. Especially when the sufferings and destructions are far away and non-observable. Saying that we are destroying the earth and causing destruction and sufferings so that some people in the fortunate world can live in luxury is an evaluation sentence. It states that the prioritizing they do is wrong, and the values are that we should take care of each other and the earth, not focusing on money, which is a moralized statement.

Evaluation sentences makes it possible to argue implicit for and against certain actions. When defining what is morally acceptable, it is harder to argue against it, especially when she speaks of survival or death, right or wrong. Her side is survival and 'the right side'. Speaking in clear terms will be explored more in the empty rhetoric frame.

By making these moral evaluations, she is referring to a value system which offers a moral foundation for legitimization. This is what was presented earlier as using an ethical framing. By rather focusing on values to steer our climate policies such as how much resource usage is acceptable at the expense of poorer people and ecosystems, this can have a bigger effect than focusing on the possibility of green technology or that it is more economically profitable. Climate science and its measurements, models and metrics cannot answer value-based political questions such as how much destruction or temperature rise should be accepted. Even though there is a broad consensus in climate change science, it is not 100 % certain. But by changing, we gain life, and protect and care about something bigger than us. We are in nature, and if we destroy what brings life around us, we are destroying ourselves and relatives without noticing it at first. Thunberg is in this frame using a broader and value-based frame which rather promotes inner motivated values such as empathy, community, and equity. Since this supports cultural values, this can have a more long-term effect. It builds upon the feeling that we are working towards a mutual, and not only individual, goal. The success of a value regime is connected to the articulation of attractive visions which connects the identities and interests of wide groups. She presents values like community, universalism, responsibility and protection of the planet. These are connected to topics many already care about, and it is about people. Protecting our children. This makes it more personal and increases the feeling of being part of something bigger, which is even more manifested by being a part of the movement, seeing thousands striking with you. However, she is not very concrete, and criticizes the whole system, which might seem radical and scary to those wanting to maintain the status quo. This will be explored further in the power shift frame when presenting that she wants a system change.

If someone believes in the fossil fuels forever imaginary and does not believe in climate science, framing the climate issue as an ethical problem where we all should prioritize the climate, does not work. They do not see the problem in the same way and will therefore not see the solutions in the same way. She frames the issue in line with the climate apocalypse imaginary by saying that this is an urgent crisis and that we should panic. CO<sub>2</sub> is the enemy, and we must focus on the emission curve. This imaginary has been criticised for presenting scenarios that are considered too extreme for the public policy, which she criticises the leaders of thinking.

Many of them on the other hand, criticises her for saying that we should panic. That they will be unpopular if they said it. She criticises capitalism and consumerism and therefore this can be very unpopular by businesses. She also refers to the sustainable lifestyle imaginary by saying that the focus on money and luxury is causing destruction, and that most people are not aware of the consequences of their everyday life. By claiming that the most important issue is to spread public awareness, she is referring to the sustainable lifestyle imaginary, making this an issue that can be solved by individual choices. She believes that if people are aware, they will make sustainable choices. As will be discussed in the power shift frame, she criticises the system itself, and claims that the power belongs to the people. Even though it seems like she is referring to the issues and solutions as individual issues and solutions, I would argue that she is criticising the system even more. She makes it an individual responsibility to put pressure on the leaders to demand change, but that the people have not failed, the leaders have. As mentioned, she says that everyone has a responsibility, but some more than others. This will be explained in the presentation of the power shift frame. But it is important to mention here within this frame, that she is not making this an individual responsibility-issue, even if she focuses on lifestyle and personal choices within the moral prophet frame.

### 5.2.2. Generational justice frame

You have stolen my dreams and my childhood, with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones [Thunberg gets emotional, breathing heavily throughout]. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money, and fairy tales of eternal economic growth [voice affected by crying]. How dare you? [applause and cheering] (PBS NewsHour, 2019, 0.29).

Hopes and dreams are what many have as children. The sky is the limit, and every child can become the president. She wants this reality back, not the reality where children are worried if they have a future or not. Many can relate to having dreams as a child. I wanted to become a princess so I could wear pretty clothes and hoped to get a letter that I got into Hogwarts to become a wizard. The worst thing that could happen was if we had overcooked broccoli for dinner or my brother stole my stuff, not a destroyed future. This was the reality I lived in, and Thunberg reminds us to realize what reality we are all living in, and that this reality is wrong.

She got emotional in the speech in Strasburg and at NY UN summit when she speaks of the destruction the earth is facing (FridaysForFuture, 2019d; PBS NewsHour, 2019). She asks the leaders not to fail them, and give them a future. She had to stop a couple of times during this speech since she was getting emotional (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). She was surprised by her emotions in NY, and she was not nervous before the speech (Skavlan, 2019b).

Showing these emotions strengthens her pathos – appeal to the audience’s emotions. By showing personal engagement she can be perceived as honest and engaged in the cause. This reminds us that she is a young girl, worried about her future. She is not a robotic politician, nor an emotionless symbol. She is a real girl, with real worries and emotions. This makes it harder to look away and it brings the crisis closer since we can see the effects it has on her when she shows her emotions. She also brings it closer and shows that she is a ‘real girl’ by explaining some timeframes and makes the time more personal. She says that in 2030 she will be 26 years old, and her little sister Beata will be 23 years old. She mentions that this is the same age as many of the children or grandchildren of the people in the audience. Even though she has been told that this is a great age and you have all your life ahead of you, she is not so sure it will be so great for them (WWF UK, 2019). She brings in not only herself, but also her little sister and the family of the audience. She is humanizing herself and referring to her being the same as their children or grandchildren. It can make them think of their children or grandchildren the next time she speaks as well, since she has already established this reference. This makes it harder to look away, since it is not just ‘any’ child, it is their own family, or the girl speaking to them in the flesh. It is not an abstract child, but a concrete one. She symbolizes not only the climate cause, but their own family, making the cause closer to home. This can also strengthen the appeal to the audience’s emotions when she brings in family, since most have an emotional bond to their families, and wants the best for their children. The aspect of concretizing and bringing the cause closer is also the case when she compares the world with a house as explained in the previous frame. She brings climate change close by speaking of herself and bringing up her little sister by name. She talks of the future and that she will be 26 years old in that future. She brings the time closer and more concrete by saying how old she and her sister will be. For most people she is addressing in the audience of this speech, being 26 is a part of their past, not their future. But it is her and her sister’s future, and many of the audience’s own children or grandchildren, bringing it even closer by bringing up the leader’s own family. She says that she has been told that it is a great age since the whole life is in front of her. The older generation she was speaking to would probably relate to the times where their whole life was in front of them, not worrying if the world would face an ecological crisis. She accuses them of stealing their future and selling that prosperous future, because they only focus on money.



### Explain it to your children

She wants the leaders and companies to take real and bold climate action for the sake of their children and grandchildren and the beautiful living planet (FridaysForFuture, 2019b). She tells them that maybe her future grandchildren will ask her why the leaders did not do anything when there was still time to act. Even though they say that they love their children above all else, they are stealing their future in front of their eyes (Thunberg, 2018). She also asks the leaders what reasons they will give their children for failing them and leaving them with a climate chaos when they had the chance to avoid it. Will they say that it seemed so bad for the economy to cut their emissions? That this was the reason for resigning the idea of securing future living conditions without giving it a try? She tells them to act as if they loved their children above all else (Guardian News, 2020). She is here using mythopoesis as legitimation through telling a story. She is speaking of the future and an alternative outcome, by saying maybe her future grandchildren will ask why the leaders chose not to act and asking them what reasons the leaders will give their children for choosing to fail. She presents a suggestion, that sustainability would be so bad for the economy that they left their children with climate chaos. These are cautionary tales where the ‘heroes’, which in this case are the leaders, must face the consequences of their choices. They must look their own children in the eyes to explain why they chose to fail them and leave them with climate chaos. She is legitimizing through telling a cautionary tale, describing a possible future where the leaders must live with the consequences of their present actions. Not just that they will be living in climate chaos, destruction, sufferings, and air pollution, but that they also must face their kids. This brings the family into it, which brings it closer. In the following, other examples of legitimation through mythopoesis will be presented.

[I]f we fail to do so [focus on climate change], then all our achievements and progress have been for nothing. And all that will remain of our political leaders’ legacy will be the greatest failure of human history. And they will be remembered as the greatest villains of all time because they have chosen not to listen and not to act. But this does not have to be. There is still time (FridaysForFuture, 2019c, 5.14).

She refers to the political leaders as the greatest villains of all time if they choose not to listen or act. Our achievements will have been pointless, and their legacy will be the greatest failure of human history. She is saying that this will happen if we do not focus on climate change. Not just focusing on that we will face climate change, but that this will be the legacy of the leaders. As mentioned earlier, the social attention is a strong motivator for action. Therefore, the social consequences they must face, of being villains and failures, guilty of stealing the future from the young, might have a bigger impact on some people than having to face a non-observable climate crisis in the future. However, she ends on a positive note, saying that there is still time.

This possible outcome is not final. She presents the solution to how they can avoid being remembered as the great villains, since she has already presented what led to them being villains and failures, which was not listening or acting sustainably. There is time, and she has told them what to do. As mentioned in the moral prophet frame, she is defining what is good and bad, and the bad will lead to them being villains and failing.

### [My generation will fight](#)

The school strikers cannot leave everything to the politicians and only vote when they are old enough since the politics and political will to find solutions are nowhere in sight (Facing Future, 2019). The ones in power must vote for their children and grandchildren and the future living conditions of humanity since they will be the most affected by the choices made now, and they are not old enough to vote (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). By the year 2020 the emissions curve must be bended steep downwards, so there is not enough time for the school strikers to wait to grow up and be the ones in charge (FridaysForFuture, 2019c). “Unlike you, my generation will not give up without a fight” (Guardian News, 2020, 12:29). In the UN Climate summit in New York she says that the leaders that they are failing the young, but that the young people had started to understand their betrayal. If the leaders choose to fail, the young will not forgive them, and the future generations eyes are upon them. The young ones will not let them get away with choosing to fail (PBS NewsHour, 2019). The young generation is starting to see through the leaders lies and will hold them accountable. The strikers will be a constant reminder that the leaders are failing (CBS News, 2019b). She thinks the saddest part is that most children do not know which fate awaits them, and that it will be too late until they understand the climate emergency. She is one of the lucky ones, and the ones that will be affected the most are already suffering the consequences of climate change, but their voices are not being heard (WWF UK, 2019). In these examples she is saying that the young ones are not being heard. They are not old enough to vote, and their future is being stolen from them in front of their eyes. The leaders act responsibly, taking the future of the next generation into consideration when they vote and make decisions. She gives power to the young by saying that her generation will not give up without a fight. They will not forgive the leaders if they choose to fail, and the eyes of future generations are upon them. The young ones are a force to be reckoned with. The power of the people will be explained in the power shift frame. She is making a distinction between the young and the leaders. She speaks on the behalf of a whole generation when saying ‘our generation’ will not give up without a fight. Making it clear that the leaders are failing, and her generation will not let them get away with it. The distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ will be explained further in the following.

### Let us be children

“They say, ‘Let children be children’. We agree. Let us be children. Do your part, and not leave the responsibility to us. Then we can go back to being children” (CBS News, 2019a, 10:25) to massive applause at a strike in Montreal. She says that it is wrong that she is up there speaking. She should be back in school (PBS NewsHour, 2019).

We children are doing this [striking] to wake the adults up. We children are doing this for you to put your differences aside and start acting as you would in a crisis. We children are doing this because we want our hopes and dreams back (WWF UK, 2019, 11:41).

She thinks it is wrong that she needs to speak up against their inaction. She wants to be a child, and she wants the school strikers to go back, not worrying about if they have a future or not. She is legitimizing her argument by rationalization. It is common sense that children should be children, and the leaders should do their job. She wants the leaders to act responsibly. Again, making a distinction between the ‘young’ and the ‘adults’. As will be argued in the power shift frame, she is shifting the normal discourse. It is more usual that the adults are waking up the kids. They are supposed to be the responsible ones, making sure the children have done their homework, eaten their vegetables and woke up on time. Now she is saying that the children are striking to wake the adults up. And the young do not want the responsibility, they want to be children again. They want their hopes and dreams back but cannot do that until the adults are taking responsibility. She often emphasizes that she is a child, like when she says that it is ok not to listen to her since she is just a 16-year-old schoolgirl from Sweden (FridaysForFuture, 2019d) or that they are ‘just children’ after all (Thunberg, 2019). Here, she addresses that she is a young girl. If she did not mention her age or that she is a schoolgirl we would still get that message by looking at her speaking since she looks young. Still, she often introduces herself this way. Being a young and not a typical leader aligns with the charismatic leadership. She points out that she is not a conventional leader. And this can have an appeal by itself. She is not a trained politician, she is a ‘nobody’ which has managed what is seemingly impossible: mobilizing many youths. In chapter 5.5. her having charismatic qualities will be explored further.

She agrees that it is wrong that the strikers are striking. The strikers do not have anything new to say about climate change since they are repeating what the scientists are saying, as will be presented in the scientific frame. She reminds them that she and the school strikers are children. This is both making it more real when she says that their future is being stolen. Most children are happy, only concerned about what they are having for dinner. When the children find it important and right to strike for their future, it must be important.

They should not have a worry in the world, yet they are using their time doing this. She is travelling around the world to spread the message. Preparing speeches, traveling across Europe with trains, and using a couple of weeks to sail over the Atlantic Ocean to travel and give speeches and interviews there for many weeks. This might seem fun for a couple of weeks, but most people would agree that after a while, it gets exhausting. One can imagine that most kids, and adults, would give up. When she constantly says that she is a child, they get reminded again of her young age, and that she is not just a ‘symbol’. A child should not be responsible of telling their parents to clean up their mess, it should be the opposite.

### Clean up their mess

Once again, they sweep their mess under the carpet for our generation to clean up and solve [applause]. And if you think that we should be in school instead, then we suggest that you take our place in the streets striking from your work. Or better yet, [applause] join us so it can speed up the process (FridaysForFuture, 2019c, 6:26).

“We promise, once they [the leaders] start taking the responsibility and do their job, we will stop worrying and go back to school, go back to work [applause]” (CBS News, 2019a, 6:52). She says that the children now must take the responsibility the leaders should have taken long ago even though it should not be up to the children, but someone has to do it (CBS News, 2019a), and the children are left with the burden of telling it like it is, since the leaders are not mature enough, or afraid of being unpopular (see e.g. Thunberg, 2018). In these quotes, she is saying that the leaders have failed and leaves it up to the young ones to fix. ‘Cleaning up their mess’ is a colored phrasing. She is not saying that now the leaders have tried their best, and now the young ones will try their best. She is defining the situation ‘a mess’ and the young ones must now clean this up. Not to try with the same chance as the leaders, but they will be left with a worse situation than the leaders, since they have made a mess. This is also a phrasing that it is normal that the adults tell their children. That they must clean up their mess at the dinner table, or if the kids have made a mess in their rooms. This ‘adult vs. child’ discourse will be explored in the power shift frame, but within the generational justice frame it is important to mention that the young ones have been ‘left with’ a worse situation by the adults, than the adults had when they came to power. Therefore, the issue is generational since the young generation is the victim, and the older generation is the villain. The older generations are making the situation worse for the young ones. She often speaks of ‘our’ or ‘my’ generation and ‘you’ or ‘they’ which are the leaders. Even though she is making a distinction between a ‘us’ and ‘them’, she also often speaks of cooperating when saying that the leaders should join the school strikers to speed up the process. Even though the leaders are the guilty ones if they do not act sustainably, they can be a part of the solution as well. They have failed but can fix it.

To be afraid of being unpopular is also often what people have experienced in school. Everyone wanted to play with the popular kids and fit in. Off course, wanting to be popular is not an isolated issue for only young people. But she does not accept it as a reason for contributing to climate change.

When she is communicating the concerns of a young generation, she is making it close to people's lives, which was presented as important in chapter 3. Thunberg talks about how the school children cannot participate in politics when she says that they are too young to vote, or that that they are treated as children and not taken seriously. But they can make their voices heard in other ways. Such as participating in Fridays for Future. She makes it close to the young people's lives, and this can make it interesting to engage with the movement. Defining it as a generational issue, with the young generation as the victims can make it more appealing to join the movement for the young ones. They are defined as the victims of something unfair. Therefore, the cause is closer to them. Speaking up against this might be appealing. And the leader of the movement is a part of the generation that has been betrayed. This is important information before going into the next frame: the power shift frame.

### 5.2.3. Power shift frame

My message is that we'll be watching you [...]. You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: we will never forgive you. W.. [applause] We will not let you get away with this. Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming, whether you like it or not (PBS NewsHour, 2019, 0:25).

She refers to the leaders as spoiled irresponsible children, that they are behaving like children (FridaysForFuture, 2019c) and not mature to tell it like it is (see e.g. 350.org, 2019). The fact that she is a child herself gives this another dimension when she calls them children. This is the rhetoric that you would expect that her parents use when she is not doing her homework, coming home too late or if she has not cleaned her room. Instead, she is using this rhetoric about the leaders. This frame is called the power shift frame since she is belittling the leaders and empowering herself by referring to them as children. If an adult were saying to other adults that they were behaving like children, it would not have been as powerful. She is shifting the power dynamic by talking to the adults as if they were children, using phrases many heard as a child, and probably have said or thought as adults about a child. In September, she said that the leaders were still not mature enough to tell it like it is (PBS NewsHour, 2019). By saying that they are *still* not mature enough, this means that they had their chance to mature, but did not. She repeats it until they learn.

As mentioned in the introduction, she said in an interview that she is the parent and her father is the child. She must tell him to clean up, she made her parents go vegan, she made her mom change her job and she checks their receipts to see if they have bought something unnecessary. She has been used to act as an adult and treating adults as children and that they do it once they realize the importance. She is like Pippi, a competent child with superpowers, speaking up against the powerful, like Bamse and Palme. She talks like she is the adult, but constantly reminds them that she and the school strikers are children which was described in the generational justice frame. She refers to her and the school strikers as children, and the leaders for adults, but calling them children with an adult rhetoric. Like a disappointed parent. She says that “even a small child can understand that the main solution to climate change is to stop the emissions of greenhouse gases” (Facing Future, 2019, 2:20). She is just a small child, telling the ones in power that the solution is so simple that a child can understand it. Implicitly saying that they have not understood it. She also explicitly says that they do not understand, which will be explained in the following.

“[N]ot one single time have I heard any politician, journalists or business leader even mention these numbers [from IPCC report] [small applause starting]. It is almost like you don't even know they exist [applause], as if you haven't even read the latest IPCC reports on which the future of our civilization is depending” (Thunberg, 2019, 2:40).

She is criticizing the media who are supposed to inform the public for not doing their job, and that it is like they are not aware of the current best science. That they are not informed on something as important as a document which our civilization is depending. We must do what is seemingly impossible (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). “And for the record, when we children tell you to panic, we're not telling you to go on like before” (Guardian News, 2020, 6:34). They school strike because they have done their homework, and that the ones trying to avoid talking about it has not (FridaysForFuture, 2019c) and therefore they do not understand the situation (see e.g. Guardian News, 2020). If the leaders had done their homework, they would know that they do not have any other choice than working together and find a way to share the resources sustainably (FridaysForFuture, 2019c). “You can't simply make up your own facts just because you don't like what you hear” (Thunberg, 2019, 4:43). She criticizes the ones asking the school children how to solve the crisis. When they answer: ‘no one knows for sure. But we have to stop burning fossil fuels and restore nature and many other things that we may not have quite figured out yet.’ The response is that it is not an answer and the school strikers say that ‘we must treat the crisis like a crisis and act even if we don't have all the solutions.’ The response is again that it is not an answer.

But when the school children start talking about circular economy and rewilding nature and the need for a just transition, they don't understand what the school children are talking about (WWF UK, 2019). Homework is associated with children. People have criticized her for missing school lessons, but here she says that the very reason to strike, is because they have done their homework. She is saying the leaders are not realizing the reality we are facing, but she and the school children are. They cannot make up their own facts, they have not done their homework or realize the reality we are in. Once they realize this, they can tell her how to communicate this reality without sounding alarmist, since she has been called alarmist for saying that we must panic. Making up facts is not what people normally associate with adult and mature behavior. Off course, I would argue that this has changed the last few years, at least it has become more evident in the world of the internet. People are talking of fake news, alternative facts and conspiracy theories. As mentioned earlier, even though the climate science is getting better, the people are less worried. We might be entering a post-truth era where science and opinions are equated, and social media has become an increasingly powerful political tool. The impact of social media is also important for Fridays For Future and Thunberg since she is communicating with her followers on social media. Sharing scientific articles, videoclips, news and where she is or will be striking. Freedom of speech and social media might be an important factor of why people are not believing in climate science, since they choose what 'science' to believe, or rather listen to easily accessed people online who are not expert. Their own beliefs and values can be confirmed, as presented earlier as the mental barriers to avoid climate change action. When Thunberg is referring to homework, this might mean something else for someone who does not believe in climate science. Then, the homework could be reading 'alternative facts' that confirms their believes. This would for instance be the case for those believing in the fossil fuels forever imaginary who might not believe in climate science, or the techno-market imaginary believing that we can invent and build ourselves out of climate change when the technologies needed are not invented at scale yet. She says that 'this world, in case you haven't noticed, is currently on fire' as mentioned earlier. By emphasizing 'in case you haven't noticed' also suggests that it is now so obvious that the climate crisis is here, so you can no longer look away, as she also have said many times before.

### You have failed

For 25 years countless of people have stood in front of the United Nations climate conferences, asking our nations' leaders to stop the emissions. But clearly this has not worked since the emissions just continue to rise. So I will not ask them anything. Instead I will ask the people around the world to realize that our political leaders have failed us (FridaysForFuture, 2018, 0:0).

She claims that from a sustainability perspective, all political ideologies have failed, so it is not about party politics. Not one economic structure or political ideology has tackled the climate and environmental emergency and created a sustainable world (Guardian News, 2020). This is not about party politics, the main enemy is physics (CBS News, 2019c). She brings the discussion out of a political spectrum and says that this is an issue for everyone. She is not there to tell people to vote right or left, since every political ideology have failed. As mentioned, she still presents values associated with the left side.

She claims that the leaders' plans are insufficient (see e.g. Guardian News, 2020) and if the leaders had acted in time, the crisis wouldn't be the crisis it is today (CBS News, 2019a). Again, using rhetoric one would associate with an adult speaking to a child, or at least a person higher up in the hierarchy. The plans are insufficient, not good enough, or unacceptable. She, as a teenager, is telling the leaders that what they are doing is not good enough for her standards. This is related to the moral prophet frame about her moral evaluation. Within the power shift frame, this is important since she gives herself the 'power' to define the situation, what is good enough and who has failed.

When the school strikers are being criticized for wasting valuable lesson time, she reminds us that the political leaders themselves have wasted decades by doing nothing and denied the science. By doing this, we have less and less time, and the young ones have to start cleaning up their mess (FridaysForFuture, 2019c). She is using their own critique against them. They tell her that she is wasting lesson time, she reminds them of the decades they have wasted. Telling the leaders that they have failed is powerful since they have a lot of political power and she is 'just' a child. This shifts the power dynamic. She blames the leaders for giving up, being afraid to address the uncomfortable facts, thinking that it is too depressing and that people will give up, while in fact they themselves are giving up (Guardian News, 2020). It seems like this is to place the blame on them, knowing that they might be doing something wrong, but not realizing that they have the choice. They are giving up, but they do not understand the situation, and therefore does not understand the seriousness of the crisis or realize that they can in fact make changes and turn this around. Giving up means that you have lost and choose not to continue fighting, and that they have not really tried in the past. This is connected to the moral prophet frame, where she claims that they have a choice, and that they are currently choosing to fail. By saying that they have given up, she is saying that they can try again. Telling them that they have failed and that their actions are not good enough is a critique of them not doing their job.



The politicians are depending on people wanting to vote on them, so telling them that they are failing is not what someone depending on being popular would like to hear. If they do not see her as a threat, nor believe in climate science or thinking that the climate change is not a big deal, this might not be perceived as threatening since they may not take it seriously. Even though this is an attack on them, they can avoid taking it seriously if they believe in a different imaginary for instance, and therefore does not believe in climate change or they might see the issue in a different way. Also, acting in line with what the powerful fossil fuel industry might seem like a better strategy for the leaders than listening to a ‘young girl from Sweden’.

### Microphone

“We children are doing this [striking] to wake the adults up. [...] I hope my microphone was on. I hope you could all hear me” (WWF UK, 2019, 11:42). Saying ‘I hope you could hear me’, is something you can expect from adults. This is often used to get confirmation that they understood what you were saying. For example: ‘Do your homework’ Silence from the child. ‘Did you hear me?’ ‘Yes dad’. This would be the more normal usage of this. It was not clear if her references to the microphone or if they could hear her was planned or not. She asked several times if they could hear her during the speech, and there seemed to be problems with the microphone. I had to use two different recordings of this speech since some sound was missing from one of them (WWF UK, 2019), and the other did not contain the whole speech, but had the parts the first recording missed (The Guardian, 2019c). From my point of view, this did not seem planned. If that is the case, her improvisation skills are impressive, since she implemented it in her message. If it were planned, this would be clever. I first read the speech and thought it was planned. When I saw the video, I was surprised that it did not seem planned at all, but that she did in fact struggle with her microphone. She asked if her English was ok and if they could understand, and said ‘because I am beginning to wonder’ (The Guardian, 2019c; WWF UK, 2019). When saying this, it was almost like she thought they could not understand her. I interpret her saying ‘because I’m beginning to wonder’ as if this would be a valid reason for people not taking what she is saying seriously. That the reason for people ignoring her for all those months was because they could not hear or understand her. This might just be her wondering about this in that specific situation. Still, it is a part of her speech, and in line with what else she is saying when accusing them for ignoring her and the science. Also, I assume that she knows that her English is in fact very good, since people have criticized her for having a too good pronunciation and vocabulary, as mentioned in the introduction.

## Unpopular

The politicians often tell her that doing anything drastic will be unpopular amongst voters. She says that they will be unpopular unless the people are aware that these changes are required. This is why she asks everyone to unite behind the science and make the best available science the heart of politics and democracy (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). As mentioned, she says that the most important thing is to create a wide public awareness. She believes that if people get more information and understand the situation, the politicians can take the measures needed to fight climate change without becoming unpopular. She criticizes politicians, leaders and the media for not addressing the science because it is too uncomfortable (see e.g. CBS News, 2019a) or becoming unpopular, being the bad guy and making people depressed (see e.g. FridaysForFuture, 2019d). She says that she and the strikers are becoming the bad guys since they must tell the uncomfortable climate facts when no one else dares or wants to (Thunberg, 2019). Being unpopular does not seem like a valid reason for risking the future living conditions on earth. Being unpopular is a real risk, as she explains that she and the strikers are becoming the bad guys repeating uncomfortable climate facts that other people do not dare to say. This can be related to school yard behavior. ‘I dare you to..’ or ‘I don’t think you dare to do it’, and then kids do it just to prove them wrong. This is not just child specific. But avoiding a topic that Thunberg claims is the most important topic because they are afraid, is not a valid reason to her. You would not expect that adults are mocking and bullying a child. “[J]ust for quoting and acting on these numbers, these scientific facts, we receive unimaginable amounts of hate and threats. We are being mocked and lied about by elected officials, members of Parliaments, business leaders, journalists” (Thunberg, 2019, 3:36). Business leaders, members of Parliaments and elected officials are respected people in society, and you would imagine them to be respectful as well. In the school yard, adults tell kids that they should come to the adults to say if someone is being mean to them. Normally, this means if kids are being mean to them and they might say that they should be ashamed of themselves. Here, the adults are mocking the kids. Bullying is often referred to as a shameful act. Parents might say that they are disappointed if they find out that their kid are bullying others. An act you would assume ended when they grew up. Of course, this is not a unique situation. With social media, mocking and bullying have become a big problem. I will not get into this but will mention that it is not unique that she is mocked. What is unique I would say, is that she is a child being mocked by respected adults. She is saying that the reasons why they do not address these numbers are because they are afraid of being unpopular, and because they do not know since they have not done their homework, as mentioned earlier. Fear of being unpopular is a valid reason for politicians.

Their power is based on them getting votes, and they must be popular to get votes. It is the same for the media. They rely on people wanting to listen and read them. And by being mocked and criticized for talking of the climate changes, the fear of being unpopular is real. It happened to her. Even though she has gotten massive support, she has also been criticized, as mentioned in the introduction and she mentions in this example. However, she is presenting a solution. If people understand why it is necessary to talk about and take the measures needed, then they would understand. That is why establishing a broad public awareness is the most important thing to do.

### System change

“[U]nless we recognize the overall failures of our current systems we must probably... those probably don't stand a chance” (Facing Future, 2019, 1:37). She claims that from a sustainability perspective, every political ideology and economic structure has failed to tackle the climate and environmental emergency (see e.g. Guardian News, 2020). The system itself must be changed if solutions within the current system are so impossible to find (Thunberg, 2018). We must change the rules since there are no rules to keep the 100 million of barrels used every day in the ground. Therefore, saving the world can no longer be done if we play by the rules. The only solution is to change those rules (FridaysForFuture, 2018). We must change almost everything and everyone in our current societies (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). “Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather than what is politically possible, there is no hope” (Thunberg, 2018, 2:29). The politics needed to find solutions to the climate crisis are nowhere in sight. The political will nor the politics needed are nowhere to be seen (Facing Future, 2019). She claims that climate crisis is the hardest issue we have ever faced since our current economies are dependent on burning fossil fuel, which results in the destruction of ecosystems to be able to create an everlasting economic growth (WWF UK, 2019). She claims that we must realize that we need new economies and new politics that bases everything on a rapidly decreasing and extremely limited remaining carbon budget. But even this will not be enough. We need a new way of thinking. The current political system is all about competition, with the focus on winning and getting power, and therefore people are cheating. She asks the ones in power to stop competing and rather cooperate to share the resources fairly and sustainably (FridaysForFuture, 2019c). Thunberg claims that the carbon budget must become a new global currency in the heart of present and future economies (Facing Future, 2019) and that we should measure our wealth and success in the greenhouse gas emission graph, not the curve of economic growth. The center of our economics should be to ask ourselves if we have enough of the carbon budget to spare to go through with it, and not just if we got enough money (WWF UK, 2019).

She is criticizing capitalism, its competitive nature and focus on money, and how this is happening at the expense of natural resources. As mentioned, a lot of environmental policy is symptom calming since it came after the production process. She wants a complete system change so that it is no longer symptom calming, but goes to the root of the problem. If she were only criticizing one powerful person, that would be remarkable. The classic David vs. Goliath situation. She is not only taking on several people, she is standing up to the political and economic system across the globe, specifically the financially fortunate, who is the most powerful and capitalism. She is not just facing one Goliath, but several. Off course, she is not alone. She has the school strikers. But they are not the ones up there, nor are there millions striking every week. She has support, but she is alone on the front line of the climate fight. Even though she often speaks in black and white which will be explained further in the empty rhetoric frame, and says that there is a right side, as explained in the moral prophet frame, she recognizes that the current systems are depending on the production system using fossil fuels. Breaking the rules and expectations are characteristics of a charismatic leader. This will be explored further in chapter 5.5.

She is aware that the economies are depending on fossil fuels, so we must change this. We need new political and economic thinking. We must cooperate and focus on the carbon budget, not just economical budgets. She says that the politics needed do not exist today, but that there are some alternatives that are worse than others. Some parties do not want her to speak in Brussels since they desperately do not want to talk of climate breakdown. She is aware that some people do not want to listen to her or that she is a part of the summits (see e.g. FridaysForFuture, 2019d). I assume that she refers to them being the worse alternative since she talks of the ones not wanting her to speak after saying that some alternatives are worse than others. This also correlates with her constantly criticizing the ones trying to ignore the science, which will be presented in the scientific frame. When addressing that she knows that they do not want her there, she shows that she is aware, but does not care since she is up there even though some did not want her to. Her showing that she is not being defeated by the critique gives her more strength. She demonstrates that she is aware of the critique, reminds the audience of that critique, and shows that this does not affect her.

She expects them to call her naïve and says that she knows it is going to be hard to transition into a more sustainable world, and that it might seem like they are asking for a lot, but that this is the very minimum amount of effort needed (Guardian News, 2020).

She is acknowledging that it will not be easy. She does not believe that there is an easy solution, even though the solution is simple: cutting emissions. That is hard, but necessary. She is acknowledging that the current systems depend on fossil fuels, but that this means that the systems must change. It will not be enough to change our political leaders or political parties. Everyone has failed, and the system itself must be changed to reach the temperature target. Looking at the monetary budget will not be enough, we must also look at the carbon budget, and let this dictate the choices we make. She criticizes the objective violence by saying that we need a complete system change. She criticizes capitalism, like the environmental movement did during its first decades. While the critique of capitalism in the 60's and 70's resulted in an increased individualization where the actions of individuals was the focus, she criticizes the structural system itself. She criticizes the political system, and consumerism, not the people. She brings it back to a class issue, and not an individualized responsibility when she brings in equity. However, in some aspect she does have some of the similarities as the individualized shift in the 70's, but it is more about the fact that one person can contribute to demanding a structure change. Even though Thunberg is vegan, has a shop stop and does not fly, this does not seem to be what she is focusing on. Even though she is making these individualized lifestyle choices, she wants people to get together to create a political mass movement and does not speak of her individual lifestyle choices unless she is asked in interviews. As mentioned, the individual responsibility to make demands to services and products replaced the political mass movement. Thunberg is moving the focus from targeting subjective violence with an identifiable agent to objective violence which is the system and structure itself. She is also contributing to the totalization tendency when she says that there will not be a future, which is in line with the climate apocalypse imaginary. This imaginary contributes to a questioning of capitalism and consumerism, support for environmental organization and heavier governmental regulations. This is not popular by those in the fossil fuel imaginary and governments, organizations and businesses who rely on consumerism and capitalism. Even though she is brutal in her critique, she does bring in hope as well, which will be presented in the following.

### People are powerful

It seems like she brings fear into her speeches but brings hope with her power. Even though Thunberg explicitly says she will not give hope (TEDx Talks, 2018) she is giving hope to the people in the movement by proving that she can be heard. Therefore, when she says that she will not give hope, this seems to be directed at the leaders.

Adults keep saying we owe it to the young people to give them hope. But I don't want your hope. I don't want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act. I want you to act as if you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if the house was on fire, because it is (Facing Future, 2019, 5:16).

She says that it is not hopeful to them that the leaders say that everything will be alright, while doing nothing. She tells them that they cannot just sit around waiting for hope to come. She tells them that it does not seem like they understand that hope is something they must earn (FridaysForFuture, 2019c). She says that we are desperate for any signs of hope, and that she has seen hope. Not from the corporations or governments, but by the people who now are becoming aware. Once we are aware, we can change. The people are ready for change, and that is the hope since we have democracy. She reminds us that democracy does not just happen on Election Day, but every second, every day. All the great changes in history has come from the people, and it is the public opinion that runs the free world. She says that they do not have to wait, they can start the change now (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). She says that the important changes have always come from the bottom up (CBS News, 2019a). She connects something many agree upon, that the participation of the people and the free expression of people opinion is good and connects this to climate change. Choosing to follow her and her cause will therefore also be choosing that people have power and the right to express their discontent. We can change a situation by putting pressure on the leaders and demanding changes. She tells the leaders that we should still be heard even though they are the ones making the decisions. If the leaders cannot act on behalf of the people, they are not doing their job. As presented, when communicating climate change, it is important to focus on local issues and solutions what you can do to help, that what you do is efficient and that someone else is doing it as well. Giving people something concrete to do, and the opportunity of showing this to others and give them the opportunity of being a part of a community is effectful. The strikes are giving people a concrete tool. It is a local solution since they can join a global strike, if there are strikes there off course. It shows what you can do to help, others are doing it and it works since Thunberg is constantly invited to summits and being in the media, and she is the spokesperson of that movement. When climate strikes reach the media, and you have been a part of a strike, this shows that what you do is efficient and that others are doing it as well. Social attention is a strong motivator for action.

Some would say we are wasting lesson time. We say we are changing the world. [...] We have been told so many times that there is no point in doing this. That we won't have an impact anyway. That we can't have an impact and make a difference. But I think we have proven that to be wrong by now [applause] (CBS News, 2019a, 11:22).

Since the leaders are failing, the hope must be in the people. Many people look up to her and what she has accomplished. She says ‘we’ such as when she says we, the people (Extinction Rebellion, 2019), we are school striking (see e.g. FridaysForFuture, 2019c) we children (see e.g. Guardian News, 2020), we are the change (CBS News, 2019a). Using ‘we’ instead of ‘I’ or ‘they’ she makes herself more relatable, reminding them that she is also one of the people. She is not special; she is one of them. If she is heard, anyone else can be heard as well. The people have spoken and will continue to do so until the leaders listen and act. Also, she reminds the leaders she is speaking to that they are a force to be reckoned with. She is not alone. Often, she refers to how many people are striking, especially when she is speaking at strikes (see e.g. FridaysForFuture, 2019d) and that they should be very proud of themselves. They have done this together. It is incredible to unite for a common cause in such a way, and that it feels great ‘doesn’t it?’ (CBS News, 2019a). By referring to how many they are, she reminds the participants of the movement and the leaders that they are a force to be reckoned with. Even though she often speaks alone, she has a lot of support across the globe. She reminds us of this, which helps her become more powerful since she is not alone. In Brussels she asked local Fridays for future-organizers to get on stage with her. She showed the support she has in a physical and concrete way, making it visible that she is not alone. By also reminding the strikers of how many they are, she is telling them that they are not alone, and that the movement they are a part of is strong. By saying ‘it feels great, doesn’t it?’ she is in a way asking them if they agree with her, even though she is holding the speech on a stage in front of the strikers, so they can only answer by for example applause. She also colors it in a positive way by saying that it feels great. She is not asking: ‘how do you feel about this?’ which would be a more neutral way of asking. It is more of a rhetorical question. Off course, the strikers were not forced to be at the strike, so it is fair to assume that they came there by free will, wanting to be there, and therefore ‘feel great’ about being there.

You have ignored us in the past and you will ignore us again. We have run out of excuses and we are running out of time. We have come here to let you know that change is coming whether you like it or not. The real power belongs to the people (Thunberg, 2018, 3:09).

She is here saying that it does not matter what the leaders do. They have ignored them before and will continue to do so, but this will not stop the strikers. The leaders have failed them, but change is coming. The school strikers will not accept their excuses, and they are running out of time. She reminds the people that they are powerful, lets the leaders know that the people have power and must be listened to. She is also giving the young people tools to show their discontent by starting these strikes. She is telling them that they have power to make a difference.

They can show their discontent physically by joining the strikes. As mentioned earlier, she asked the leaders to vote on their behalf, since they are the ones who must live with the consequences. She says that we can do anything, including finding a way to avoid ecological breakdown. Humans are adaptable and can still fix the situation. But they cannot have any excuses, the opportunity to fix the ecological crisis does not last for long, so action is needed today (WWF UK, 2019). As mentioned in the moral prophet frame, she says that the lack of awareness is everywhere, and this needs to change. Since people have not been told about the consequences of their everyday life, they cannot know about it. She emphasizes that they have not been told in the right way, by the right people (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). Saying ‘the right way’ I assume that she believes that just telling people that we are facing climate change, is not enough if it does not have a sense of emergency, as described in the moral prophet frame. ‘The right people’ however, is trickier. It might be that she thinks the leaders could have been the right people, but they are not doing it right. It does not seem like she is referring to herself as the ‘right people’, since she does not explain the consequences of people everyday life, even though she says that this must be done. She says that climate issues are increasing so we can live in luxury, but does not really explain the actions, nor the concrete consequences of people’s everyday life. It does not seem like she is attempting to be that ‘right person’ who tells the people in the ‘right way’. It seems like she wants people to put pressure on the leaders, so that they can be the right people, and that if they listen to the scientists, they can explain to the people the necessary measures. Then they will not be unpopular because people would understand the measures they must take. The media could be the right people since she blames them for not creating a wide public awareness. The dilemma of her not using her platform at for example strikes to spread wide public awareness of the consequences of their everyday life will be discussed in the scientific frame, since she is using complicated science, and not explaining the consequences of people’s everyday life.

She wants the people to put pressure on the leaders so that they do not get away with doing nothing and hold them accountable for their (in)actions. If the people are not aware, they cannot put pressure on the people in power to act and fix the climate crisis. At the strike in Vancouver, she says that they will be a constant reminder that the leaders are failing. They will hold them accountable. They are not just some kids skipping school, but an unstoppable wave of change that will make them act. They can, and they will. “And if you feel threatened by that, then I have some very bad news. This is just the beginning. We will continue [applause]. Because change is coming, whether you like it or not” (CBS News, 2019b, 10:06).



She presented the numbers on how much the leaders have been invested in fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement, and how some companies and the G20 countries are responsible for most of the emissions (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). By showing that she is aware of their (in)actions, she can keep track of them if they continue to fail the Paris Agreement. She and the strikers can hold them accountable. Demonstrating how much she knows also shows that she is watching them. She has specific facts on Ireland, Norway (FridaysForFuture, 2019d) and England (WWF UK, 2019) and refers to the IPCC report and the Paris Agreement in her speeches, as will be explained further in the scientific frame. It is important to mention this within the power shift frame, since it gives her power that she knows this. She is aware and lets them know that she is aware of their inactions, the science, and country specific facts and can hold them accountable.

As mentioned in the generational justice frame, she says that the young ones are starting to understand the betrayal of the leaders, and that their eyes are upon them. Humans have not failed, even though the leaders, political parties and the media have failed. She says that the young are drawing the line and will not let them get away with failing (PBS NewsHour, 2019).

Many people say that Sweden is just a small country and it doesn't matter what we do. But I've learned that you are never too small to make a difference and if a few children can get headlines all over the world just by not going to school then imagine what we could all do together if we really wanted to (Thunberg, 2018, 0:21).

She gives the people power, by saying that they will not let the leaders get away with failing them. She is therefore reminding people that they have this power. No one is too small to make a difference. They can speak up against injustice. By defining what is right and wrong, which was presented in the moral prophet frame, she empowers herself by defining this, implicitly saying that she should be listened to. By saying that they have failed demonstrates that she knows better, and that her values are the right values since she can define what they are doing as 'failing'. Her imaginary is the right one. She presents her and other climate activists demands at WEF 2020. That the banks, institutions, governments, and companies participating at the World Economic Forum of 2020 immediately halt all investments in fossil fuel extraction and exploration and fossil fuel subsidies. That they completely and immediately divest from fossil fuels, and she wants this done now. Not in 2050, 2030 or even 2021. She admits that it might seem like they are asking for a lot, and that the participants will say that they are naïve. But this is the minimum effort needed to start the rapid sustainable transition (Guardian News, 2020). By presenting these demands, she shows that she thinks that she and the other climate activists are in the position to make these demands. This demonstrates how powerful she thinks the people are.

Social attention is a strong motivator for action. When she says: 'We are watching you', 'How dare you' and 'The eyes of future generations are upon you' she implies that the leaders are being watched and judged and can be held accountable. The movement is big, which makes this more impactful. If she sat alone outside the Swedish Parliament saying this without any followers, it would not have the same effect. By having millions of participants on strikes, the message of them watching the leaders is greater and this social attention might motivate for action more than her actual message to them.

She tries to challenge the status quo and make a shift in the power balance. If it works and has effects is yet to be seen. She is lowering their status by calling them irresponsible children and at the same time rising her own by being the one saying that. Thunberg has gained a lot of political power, and this is probably contributing to her popularity. She is telling it 'like it is' and demands to be heard. This can appeal to a lot of people who do not think they have any power. This can make people think that they are not insignificant, they can also make a change. Many seem to be fond of the ones 'sticking it to the man'. This was something people liked about Trump, or Listhaug or Sandberg in Norway. They dared to say what others did not. She is now doing the same, with a completely different content of course. A young girl telling a room packed with the leaders of the world that they act like spoiled irresponsible children can appeal on its own to a lot of people fed up with the inactions and empty promises of the leaders. She is shifting the power balance by doing so. This is the frame I assume has appealed to a lot of people that are not necessarily that concerned with climate change. I would like to research this further another time, since it is just assumptions as of now.

As presented earlier, climate policies are symptom calming today. Thunberg is demanding a total system shift. When saying that we need a complete system change, she is demonstrating values which align with the sustainable lifestyle imaginary. She connects consumerism, capitalism, and our economic system with climate change, and that this must change. We cannot live with an illusion of eternal economic growth she says. This is a critique of the fossil fuels imaginary which believes that unless we use fossil fuels, we are facing a poor future, and the techno-market imaginary of inventions to save us. Even though she demands a complete system shift, she is not very concrete. A system shift might seem radical and scary to those wanting to maintain the status quo. Why new imaginaries have failed to capture public imagination can be that they appear too elitist, radical, or gloomy, and has not been connected to viable business models to create successful value regimes. The values she promotes in the previous frames can have long term effects but should as mentioned be presented with concrete solutions.

She does not present that. Even though she says that we need a complete system shift and stop the fossil fuels emissions, she is not concrete. She does mention circular economy, rewilding nature and the need for a just transition in one speech, which was presented earlier, but this was just in one speech where she said that when she suggested this, the leaders did not understand her. She does not present concrete and viable business models, or solutions on how we should execute the system change. What she suggests, are not only economic and political system changes, but cultural and social changes. This is in line with the conclusions from Limits to Growth. That preventing a climate crisis would demand changes in the design of society, lifestyles and values of the people was necessary, and international agreements and global actions were seen as the solution. The international agreements are there, and she might have started a global accountability organ in her and Fridays For Future. The success of her message is yet to be seen, and the weak link might be that she does not have concrete solutions. This is where her being a child is important. She is in a unique position of being a child. She does not have to have the solutions, and we would likely disregard an adult activist that did not have concrete solutions. However, as will be explained in the scientific frame, she says that they should listen to scientists, not her. She does not claim to have all the answers.

#### 5.2.4. Empty rhetoric frame

I still believe that the biggest danger is not inaction. The real danger is when politicians and CEOs are making it look like real action is happening when in fact almost nothing is being done apart from clever accounting and creative PR (Extinction Rebellion, 2019, 8:38).

She criticizes the ones in power for telling them not to worry since they will fix it, and that the school strikers should not be so pessimistic (Guardian News, 2020). She often says that the ones in power give false hope with their empty words (see e.g. CBS News, 2019a) and give false hope when telling the young ‘you only live once’, and ‘the sky is the limit’. They lied and gave false hope when telling the young people that the future was something to look forward to (WWF UK, 2019). Thunberg criticize the words politicians use such as ‘climate neutrality’ and setting up vague, distant dates (see e.g. Extinction Rebellion, 2019), speaking of ‘reducing’ and ‘lowering’ emissions instead of stopping emissions (see e.g. Guardian News, 2020) since this might be the most dangerous misconception when talking of the climate crisis since it seems like they are doing something (WWF UK, 2019). Net zero is pointless, real zero is necessary (Guardian News, 2020). She says that what we need is real action, not avoiding action by moving emissions to other countries, not paying for solutions, loss, and damage (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). She presents climate numbers and graphs that seems ambitious, but that have left out important numbers from emissions (WWF UK, 2019).

She blames some rich countries for misleading and not leading when they pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in many years or becoming net zero and climate neutral in many years. They are not pledging immediate reduction, which is necessary to reach the goals (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). Empty words and false hope mean that the words they use are meaningless. Like when the leaders say that they are doing what they can, doing enough, or that they have the situation under control. Their commitments to the Paris Agreement are also empty promises, since they are not doing enough to reach these goals, even though they did agree on them. As presented earlier, in COP 25 they did implement a sentence saying that countries must *increase* their *ambitions* on emission cuts when they were going to decide how to reach the goals. Being ‘ambitious’ can mean different things. What some think is ambitious might be to cut emissions by 100 %, and when the leaders say that they have ambitious goals, this can calm people down since they believe that the leaders are indeed making big cuts. However, it might mean that they will increase their ambitions by 1 %, still being responsible for a lot of greenhouse gas emissions. As presented in chapter 3, this can be an authorization for destruction as long as one keeps inside the limits of what is allowed. It approves and legitimizes the amount of destruction ‘necessary’, often with economic goals trumping ecological priorities. Using vague terms like ‘ambitious’ and ‘lowering’ is not concrete and makes it seem like the actions needed are made. It legitimizes destruction as long as you act within the limits. When the limits are vague, this can allow more destruction since you are not stepping over a line if the line is not defined. They are saying that they want to reach their commitments but are not acting accordingly. Therefore, their words are empty, like when she accuses the ones in power for hypocrisy when they are outraged that the US is leaving the Paris accord, while they themselves are failing the commitments they signed in the Paris Agreement, and this does not seem to bother them at all (Guardian News, 2020). They are pretending to do something; they focus on money or how others are failing when ecosystems are collapsing without stepping up to their own words or commitment. She blames them for lying when they say that the children’s future was bright, when they are constantly making choices that are decreasing their chances of a bright future, with living conditions that has been reduced due to the actions of today. Even though inaction is bad, she says that it is worse when they *pretend* that they do something, while doing nothing. By being vague, the leaders cannot be held accountable. If they say that it is a victory that we have lowered our emissions, this does not necessarily mean anything since lowering can mean a lot and being ambitious can mean different things to different people. But it seems like victory. If the goal is to stop the greenhouse gas emissions completely, then it does not matter how much they have lowered it.

Either you do it, or you do not. It is easier to measure and comprehend for most people. Lowering can be a little bit, or a lot. Cutting is an ‘all or nothing’-situation. Lowering is a grey area, and she says that there are no grey areas when it comes to survival. As mentioned earlier, she presents a wide public awareness as the most important thing to do since then they can speak up against the leaders. If the leaders are giving a misconception that they are doing something, the people cannot speak up against the injustice, since they are not aware.

### Black and white

People often say that nothing in life is black and white, but she claims that this is a very dangerous lie. Since we can choose to go on as a civilization or not and that this is as black and white as it gets (Facing Future, 2019). We must speak clearly even though it might be uncomfortable or make them unpopular (Thunberg, 2018). She claims that we do not have the time to speak politely. We do not have the time to only focus on what we can and cannot say when we are facing a disaster. There are no grey areas or middle ground when it comes to survival (Facing Future, 2019). Her phrasings are in line with the Manichaeism mentioned in the chapter on charismatic leadership. This is when she speaks of good or bad, survival or death, right or wrong. She also says that she wants a future, the survival of the earth, that we can choose to go on as a civilization or not. It is hard to disagree that this is the right thing to do. What is hard, is changing. Especially when it needs a complete system change since we are now relying on fossil fuel emissions as mentioned in the power shift frame. She makes it hard to disagree with her, since she speaks of survival or death. She makes her case stronger by using this dualism and presenting it like it is black or white. This black and white rhetoric is to some extent childlike. When we are children, we believe that there is good and evil. Often unnuanced. They are either good or bad. As mentioned earlier, she said that the leaders will be remembered as villains if they choose to fail. Seeing in black or white is typical for people with Asperger’s as presented earlier. It is also something childlike about not breaking a promise. Not sticking to the Paris Agreement. She has said that she does not like it when people do not hold their promises. Since climate science can seem abstract, her black and white rhetoric might be appealing. She makes it easier to understand when she is concrete.

### Nothing is being done

She often says that nothing is being done (see e.g. Extinction Rebellion, 2019) and the inaction of the leaders are fueling the flames by the hour (Guardian News, 2020). If the emissions does not stop, the actions are insufficient to stay below 1.5 degree (Guardian News, 2020).

She wants us to pull the emergency break, not using the same bad ideas that got us into this mess (Thunberg, 2018). She wants them to act according to the climate crisis, as explained in the moral prophet frame. Her critique of them pretending that they are doing enough, while nothing is being done is central within the empty rhetoric frame. She mentions that some say that we are not doing enough, but that this is not true. Because doing enough means that we are doing something, and we are basically not doing anything (FridaysForFuture, 2019b). By saying this, she criticizes the ones on ‘her side’ as well, since those criticizing the leaders of not doing enough are the ones that wants them to focus more on climate change. By saying this, she goes further and says that the ones criticizing the leaders are wrong as well, since they say that we are doing something by saying that we are not doing enough. She says that both Sweden and Canada are allegedly climate leading nations, but it does not mean anything since it is just empty words with the needed politics nowhere in sight (CBS News, 2019a). She says we must move from words, to action (CBS News, 2019c) and blames the political leaders for wasting decades of time by not doing anything and denying the science (FridaysForFuture, 2019c). She is redefining what a climate leading nation is. Sweden and Canada are allegedly climate leading nations, but she says that what they are doing is not acceptable. When someone else is worse, it is easier to justify your own actions since you are not ‘the worst’. But not being the worst does not necessarily mean that you are good. You can be ‘less bad’ than the worst. Being better than someone might calm you down. If you for example eat meat, you can think that at least you recycle, which your neighbor does not. Then you legitimize one unsustainable action by comparing yourself to someone who is worse, which can calm you down and make you feel better about yourself. She is telling us that being a ‘climate leading nation’ does not mean anything since basically nothing is happening, even though they are less bad than the countries they are compared to. As mentioned earlier, she says that everyone has failed. When the alleged climate leading nations are not climate leading nations, no one is. She is setting up a new scale of what is good enough. Even though they might be better, the politics are nowhere in sight. They cannot be lazy and do nothing just because they are the best in comparison to countries that are even worse.

### [Pretending to do something](#)

She asks them how they dare to pretend that they can solve the climate crisis with business as usual and technical solutions that does not exist and how they dare to look away from the climate science that has been crystal clear for 30 years (PBS NewsHour, 2019). When she says that they *pretend* that they can solve it and dare to *look away* she says that they are aware of their actions. This is connected to the moral prophet frame when she speaks of choosing to fail.

They present it like they have the solutions, but the technologies needed does not exist at the scale. It will likely do more harm than good when they give the impression that action is on the way when setting up distant dates and vague goals since the changes needed are nowhere in sight. They are pretending that they can solve it, and actively looking away from the facts. She criticizes countries for not seeing the full picture or finding holistic solutions to solve the crisis. They use events like COP to explore opportunities to negotiate loopholes and avoiding raising their ambitions. Countries must stop finding clever ways around having to take real action. Such as when they rather double counting emissions reductions, move emissions overseas, going back on their promises to increase ambition or refuse to pay for loss, damage, or solutions (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). By trying to say that they can buy and build their way out of a crisis that was created by building and buying things they give false hope by presenting something as a solution to get out of the crisis, while it is contributing more to the crisis since this was how the crisis was created. She accuses the politicians of giving the false impression that they have the situation under control while the technologies and inventions needed does not exist (see e.g. FridaysForFuture, 2019d). She criticizes both the fossil fuels forever imaginary and the techno-market imaginary when saying that these solutions are not good enough.

She is not only accusing them of avoiding doing something, she also criticizes them for talking about anything else than the climate crisis. She criticizes the ones that tries to shift the climate discussion over to whether the school strikes are promoting truancy, that they are puppets who cannot think for themselves etc. “When many politicians talk about the school strike for the climate, they talk about almost anything except from the climate crisis” (FridaysForFuture, 2019c, 1:29). She criticizes them for holding three emergency Brexit summits, but no climate breakdown emergency summits (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). Holding the Brexit summits can calm the public since it seems like they have the climate crisis under control and that there is no sense of urgency. They show that they have the capacity of holding emergency summits since they are doing it with Brexit but choose not to have one for the climate. Holding those emergency summits makes it seem like Brexit is more of an emergency and gives the people the impression that either the climate crisis is not such an emergency; or they have everything under control. If people are unaware of the dangers and believe that the leaders have everything, they will not put pressure on the leaders to act as explained earlier. She says that the celebration of Norway who decided to stop drilling for oil outside Lofoten, while continuing to drill everywhere else for decades are coming 30 years too late (FridaysForFuture, 2019d).

The leaders' actions are presented as progress, but they are leaving out important numbers from emissions. Therefore, it seems better than it is and gives a false hope that something is being done, when it is in fact very little (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). By celebrating these small victories, they give the impression that there is progress. This can give false hope and people might think that it is OK that Norway still drills for oil other places, since they chose not to do it in Lofoten. This makes it seem like they have the situation under control, that they are taking the situation seriously and know how to decide if they should drill there or not. Again, this approves and legitimizes the amount of destruction 'necessary', often with economic goals trumping ecological priorities. Thunberg expresses that we must stop the use of greenhouse emissions, so even if we are celebrating these small victories, we are still not improving the situation. The emission curve is still not going down. She is not just challenging the illusion of eternal growth, but also challenging the neoliberal project in general by asking them how they dare to pretend that the crisis can be solved with inventions that does not exist, which was explained in the moral prophet frame. She is criticizing the techno-market imaginary by saying that their solutions of technological inventions are not valid. She claims that the reason for why we are facing a climate crisis is due to building and buying things, which is fundamental for capitalism. She identifies this as the problem, which is in line with the sustainable lifestyle imaginary, and criticizing the system itself.

She criticizes capitalism, the fossil fuels forever imaginary and the techno-market imaginary by saying that we are in this mess due to building and buying things, and that pretending that they have everything under control is calming down the public. She is addressing the distance barrier by saying that we cannot have vague goals, but we must speak in black and white. By having vague goals with distant dates, this makes it seem like it is far away, and not that serious. Distant dates contribute to the distance barrier. She is also addressing the dissonance barrier when saying that they hold three Brexit emergency summits, but none for the climate. Here it is important to note that the dissonance barrier is if people know that they should hold emergency climate summits for example, but rather focus on Brexit. If they for instance are believing in the fossil fuels forever imaginary and denying climate change, this would not be dissonance. The barriers will be explored further in chapter 5.3. The empty rhetoric frame is somewhat an expression of the climate apocalypse imaginary. That we must act now, and she is criticizing those who are not doing anything. Criticizing capitalism and the market is in line with the sustainable lifestyle imaginary.



## Cathedral thinking

One year ago, I came to Davos and told you that our house is on fire. I said I wanted you to panic. I've been warned that telling people to panic about the climate crisis is a very dangerous thing to do. But don't worry. It's fine. Trust me. I've done this before. And I can assure you: It doesn't lead to anything (Guardian News, 2020, 6:06).

Here she starts her speech in Davos somewhat sarcastically, saying that she is experienced at being ignored and that even though she has been travelling around, creating a big movement and giving speeches, the leaders are still not doing anything. It is also somewhat ironic that she says that people tell her that telling people to panic is dangerous, while she says that we might be facing a climate crisis which can end our civilisation due to inaction. They are defining her telling people to panic as dangerous, and she is saying that ignoring the science is dangerous, since it will end in a climate catastrophe.

Many are criticizing her and the school strikers for not having any solutions to the climate crisis. She says that they are right, because how do you solve the greatest crisis in human history? She claims that the climate crisis is the easiest and hardest issue we have faced. The easiest since we know the solution, and the solution is to stop the emissions of greenhouse gases. But at the same time, it is the hardest since our current economics depend on burning fossil fuels, which results in the destruction of ecosystems to be able to create an everlasting economic growth (WWF UK, 2019). She is contradicting herself, since she has said that they do not know how to solve the crisis, but at the same time says that they know the solution. I understand it as she knows the solution, but not exactly how this should be done. This is what she refers to as 'cathedral thinking'. The foundation must be built while we still are not sure how to exactly build the ceiling (WWF UK, 2019). She introduced the idea of cathedral thinking when comparing the climate crisis to the fires in Notre Dame. She had said 'our house is on fire' before, but it got another layer at her speech in Brussels the day after the fires. She did address the Notre Dame fires and said that it was great that it was going to be rebuilt. Some buildings are more than just building, and it was a great sorrow that it burned down. But it was going to be rebuilt. She hopes that its foundations are strong, but that our foundations are even stronger, even though she fears that they are not. To manage the climate crisis, we must have a far-reaching vision, courage, and a fierce determination to lay the foundations, even though we might not have all the details of how to shape the ceiling. This is how she explains cathedral thinking (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). When using an example like this, which made many people emotional due to the cultural treasure of Notre Dame that was destroyed the day before the speech and she had said 'our house is on fire' before all contributed to making this comparison even more impactful. This is the same as the Australian fires explained earlier.

If she had not said that our house is on fire before, it might have seemed insensitive. But this was already one of her catchphrases. The burning of Notre Dame and the Australian fires added to her already existing statements. Using these concrete fires made her phrase ‘our house is on fire’ even more concrete, since it was observable and happening at that time. A house and a fire are more concrete than abstract numbers of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, but it is still not a specific house or a specific fire. The burning of Notre Dame and the Australian fires are however specific.

Saying that we do not know exactly how to do it contributes to the uncertainty regarding climate change, which many uses as a tool to not believe in it. However, she is saying that this should not stop us from doing anything. It seemed like most agreed that the Notre Dame should be rebuilt, since it quickly raised enormous amounts of money from across the world. Saying that we must act even though we are not completely sure how can lower her impact on the deniers. At the same time, it can strengthen her case. She makes herself vulnerable by acknowledging that she does not have all the answers but says that it does not matter if we do not know. We must try, even if we do not have all the solutions yet. It will not be easy, but we must try. She also compares our civilization with a castle built in the sand. The facade is beautiful, but the foundations are fragile, since we have been cutting so many corners (FridaysForFuture, 2019d). This might help people understand. Climate change can seem abstract, so using these metaphors, it makes it more understandable. ‘Cutting corners’ can refer to inaction, cheating and fiddling with number. By saying that the facade is beautiful, she says that there is more than meets the eye. Even though it might look like everything is good, the foundation is fragile. Climate change is non-observable and therefore might seem far away or not real. But as those who have built anything in the sand knows, there is not much needed before it collapses. A wave, wind, a wrong move, or an irritating sibling wanting to destroy it. Both the castle in the sand, the house and the cathedral are observable and concrete. By comparing these to climate change she connects something non-observable to something observable. She wants the leaders to speak clearly, not having vague goals of ‘lowering’ emissions.

The following and last frame is about climate science, where she speaks in black and white and concrete timeframes, which she criticizes the leaders for not using.

### 5.2.5. Scientific frame

420 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> left to emit on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 to have a 67 percent chance of staying below a 1.5 degrees of global temperature rise. And now that figure is already down to less than 360 gigatons. At current emissions levels that remaining budget is gone within roughly eight and a half years (Thunberg, 2019, 10:22).

She mentions the Paris agreement and the IPCC report with its carbon budget in almost every speech (see e.g. Facing Future, 2019). She will continue to strike each Friday until Sweden is acting in line with the Paris Agreement and it is therefore not surprising that this is an argument in the speeches. She shows that she knows the science behind it by referring to specific numbers and information from the report. Such as when she says that aiming for below 1.5 degrees temperature rather than the 1,5-2 degrees goal from the Paris Agreement they signed up for would reduce climate impacts significantly and most certainly save countless of human lives, and we will not reach this if we continue as we do now (see e.g. CBS News, 2019a).

And if anyone still has excuses not to listen, not to act, not to care, I ask you once again: Is there another Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change? Is there a secret Paris agreement that we don't know about? One that does not include the aspect of equity? Do you have a different budget for at least a reasonable chance of staying below 1.5 degrees of global temperature rise? (Thunberg, 2019, 11:05).

“You can't simply make up your own facts just because you don't like what you hear” (Thunberg, 2019, 4:43). She says that people claim that what she is saying is her ‘opinion’ or political view (see e.g. Extinction Rebellion, 2019), that the children are exaggerating and being alarmists. She answers this by referring to the IPCC report to find their ‘opinion’ summarized (Thunberg, 2019). She has several times said that they do not have time for excuses anymore. If they still have excuses, they must have better science than the existing science that says that our carbon budget is rapidly reducing. Better than the IPCC reports or another Paris Agreement that does not aim to reach the same goals. It seems like she presents this as the only valid excuse. The IPCC reports and Paris Agreement are such strong arguments in her eyes, that the only acceptable excuse is if they have better science. She does repeat a lot of the same numbers. Numbers that most people have not heard, or have problems understanding. The numbers are from the IPCC SR-1.5 report. Page 108 in chapter 2 in particular she says (Thunberg, 2019). She speaks mainly on the rapidly declining carbon budget, that we must stay below the 1,5-degree target, what the numbers include and not. She focuses on equity and that this is important to make the Paris agreement work on a global scale. Rich countries must get down to zero emissions and the poorer countries must get the chance to heighten their standard of living. She gives concrete percentages, years and uses terms many people do not know or understand. She shows that she knows what the calculations include, and what they do not.

Even what seems to be ambitious has still left out some important calculations that can end in irreversible chain reactions. She brings up the aspect of equity and shows that she understands that there is no 'one fits all'-solution (see e.g. Extinction Rebellion, 2019). She presents country specific policies that are damaging the environment and contributing to the climate crisis. She criticizes them of relying on inventions and technologies that have not yet been invented at scale. Such as inventions to clear the atmosphere of the astronomical amounts of carbon dioxide (WWF UK, 2019). She has looked into the ambitious and improved target the EU has set and mentions the concrete percentages, timeframes, what the numbers include and not (FridaysForFuture, 2019c). She shows that she knows how much the global banks have invested in fossil fuels and who are responsible for the most emissions and speaks in general of the strategy to avoid having to take real action like moving the emissions to other countries, going back on their promises to increase ambition, double counting emissions reductions, or say no to pay for solutions, loss and damage (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). She criticizes the leaders for cheating and fiddling with numbers, offsetting emissions, slaughtering the Amazon and relying on technology that does not exist (Guardian News, 2020). By showing that she is aware of this, she can also keep track of them if they continue to fail the Paris Agreement. She shows that she is watching them by demonstrating how much she knows. She is legitimizing her argument through authorization by referring to science. She speaks of general strategies, and specific facts and calculations. She mentions the consequences and explains what will happen. She does not explain in detail how this will affect people other than suffering and death. It can be hard to understand how the focus on money leads to destruction such as the loss of permafrost and irreversible chain reactions. It can be hard to see the connection. As mentioned earlier, it seems like her pragmatic intent is to get the leaders to act according to the Paris Agreement and create a wide public awareness. It does not seem like she aims to create broad public awareness of the consequences of people's everyday life. If that were the intent, she would probably have focused more on the concrete actions and consequences of people's everyday life. Even though her speeches are shared in social media, it seems like her message is primarily aimed at the leaders. However, she does use scientific terms and mentions consequences in her speeches at strikes as well (see e.g. CBS News, 2019a). If she assumes that the strikers know and understand these complicated connections is hard to say without interviewing her. She might believe that they know and understand, or that her main goal with the strikers is to get them to show their discontent with the leaders, not necessarily to create broad public awareness. She says that it is important to create wide public awareness so that people understand the situation.

However, when she has the opportunity at these strikes for example to make people understand the consequences of their everyday life, she does not go into detail nor explain the connections. She says that the focus on money causes destructions, then mentioning permafrost and irreversible chain reactions without explaining the connections. It seems like she wants the people to know, and the leaders to act. And if the leaders give restrictions to fossil fuels and this causes people's life to change, people will understand it since they know that it is necessary. It seems like her primary goal is to get the leaders to act and that they should create wide public awareness. She wants the people to help her put pressure on the leaders. It is harder to understand why she does not use the opportunity and platform she has when speaking at strikes to create this wide public awareness of the consequences of people's everyday life. She explicitly says that this should be a priority but does not prioritize it herself. Maybe she believes that the strikers know and understands the climate science, and that is the reason for why they are there. Still, it seems like a great opportunity to inform everyone about the consequences of their lifestyles. Maybe she assumes that people understand the connections between money and irreversible chain reactions, but she has said that the general problem everywhere is that people are not aware. She has only spoken in rich western countries, and these are the ones she thinks should take most of the responsibility. Not connecting people's everyday life to the consequences she speaks of might be an indication that she in fact does not have a PR-person to look over her speeches since this connection would probably be pointed out as not explained well. It can also indicate that she does not want to make the people feel criticised. This assumption however has many flaws. She does say that she does not care about being popular, and that people must be aware. If she did not want to criticise the people, who she has explicitly said have not failed, she would probably not mention any of the consequences. As mentioned in the introduction, she said on 'Ellen' that the most important thing she does is communicate and put pressure on the ones in power. She identifies the problem as a *structural* problem, and that the *individuals* can contribute by *putting pressure* on those who have the power to change the structures. However, it is impossible to conclude why she does not explain the consequences of people's everyday life in her speeches, without interviewing her.

She shows her understanding by describing alternative and more risky pathways and explains how big of a chance we then have, and how long we now have (Thunberg, 2019). Even though she has said that the science has been crystal clear, she does bring up the uncertainty as well by saying that we cannot be sure that the point of no return might happen sooner or later than 2030.

But we can be certain that it will happen approximately within these timeframes since these projections are backed up by scientific facts, concluded by all nations through the IPCC (WWF UK, 2019). She is repeating complicated science, using scientific terms, giving country specific facts, putting up timeframes, scrutinizing the numbers and ambitions saying that it is not good enough and explains why. She is not just demonstrating that she knows and understands this, she can now hold the audience accountable if they say that they did not know these facts. She shows that she does not just speak of what is right or wrong, she has the science to back her up. These complicated numbers might scare some away, creating a distance to her since most people do not understand what she is talking about, which can make her less relatable. However, using the different frames can appeal to different audiences in every speech. By reminding them of where these facts are from and saying that it was concluded by all nations through the IPCC she not only reminds them where the science is from and therefore strengthens her argument since it is from the best available science, she also reminds them that they did agree on this. She is legitimizing her argument through authorization by referring to the best available science.

She explains why it is important to stay below 1.5-degrees temperature rise, and the consequences if we do not, how every fraction of a degree matter (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). Most people do not know the effect of the temperature rise. Most of us have heard about the 1.5-degree limit without really understanding the consequences if we do not stay below it. And saying “So there it is again [numbers from IPCC]. This is my message. This is what I want you to focus on [staying below 1.5 degrees]” (Extinction Rebellion, 2019, 4:21). She leads them into what it is she wants them to focus on. She says that she has been told to start with something personal or emotional in her speeches to get everyone’s attention like: ‘our house is on fire’, ‘how dare you’ and ‘I want you to panic’. In December 2019 she says that she would not do that, since those phrases are all that people focus on since they forget the facts and why she says those things in the first place. Emphasizing that this is her message, not just the catchphrases or anything else that she says. The message is to stay below 1.5 degrees. She also presents concrete examples of climate change consequences, like in the following quote:

Erosion of fertile topsoil, def... [pause due to emotion] deforestation of our great forests, toxic air pollution, loss of insects and wildlife, the acidification of our oceans. These are all disastrous trends being accelerated by a way of life that we, here in our financially fortunate part of the world, see as our right to simply carry on [applause] (FridaysForFuture, 2019d: 4:17).

She uses negative descriptions like ‘disastrous trends’ to describe climate change and positive descriptions when talking about the earth like ‘great forests’ and ‘beautiful living planet’ (FridaysForFuture, 2019b). She is coloring what is happening unneutral descriptions.

Most people would agree that the forests are great, that it is disastrous that we lose forests and have toxic air pollution and that the planet is a beautiful place. Still, it is important to mention that she uses these descriptions which contributes to what she presents as right or wrong. She does not present it in an objective or neutral way, which we often associate with science. She also gets emotional when talking about it. If scientists got emotional while presenting their science, it might not have been as accepted. Scientists are supposed to be objective, and emotions might cloud their judgement. She is in a unique position since she is not a scientist, but she knows the science. She can be emotional. This all strengthen her ethos and pathos since she shows that she cares about what she is talking about. Again, I want to point out that she identifies the consequences deforestation, air pollution etc., and the reason is the way we in the financially fortunate part of the world live. The connection between these can be harder to understand. She does not explain what it is about our lifestyle that causes these disastrous trends. The reason is money, luxury, and our lifestyle. But not any concrete examples of what she is referring to, nor how this is connected to the disastrous trends.

#### [Time and the end of our civilization](#)

She brings in concrete years and timeframes and speaks of how little time we have. We have run out of excuses and we are running out of time (Thunberg, 2018). We no longer have time to leave out the science (Extinction Rebellion, 2019) or wait for new technological solutions to become available to start drastically reducing our emissions (Guardian News, 2020) since the climate crisis is already right here right now, and that it has just begun and will get worse (Thunberg, 2019). It is pointless for the strikers to go to school to become climate scientists since we already have the solutions and facts, and by the time she would have finished, it would have been too late (FridaysForFuture, 2018). By the year 2030 if we continue as we do now, we might not be able to undo the irreversible climate breakdown that will most likely lead to the end of our civilization as we know it (see e.g. Thunberg, 2019). Reaching zero in 2050 is pointless since the remaining budget will be gone if continuing with emissions and that some scientists suggest that the carbon budget are too moderate (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). Even though she often speaks of this destruction and how little time we have, she also says that there is still time to fix this (see e.g. Facing Future, 2019). Even though she says that we have little time, she still says that we in fact do have time to fix it, as presented in the power shift frame. This is going against the people using the doom barrier, and the distance barrier since it is close in time. She simplifies it, such as: "[S]ince I started this speech the world has emitted about 800.000 tons of carbon dioxide" (Thunberg, 2019, 10:55). Many tons of carbon dioxide seem very abstract to many. How much is it really? Is half a ton a lot, or is 100.000 tons a lot?

Or 1.000.000? The numbers are so big that it is almost impossible to understand. By saying that since she started her speech, the world has emitted around 800.000 tons of carbon dioxide, she simplifies it and makes it less abstract. There is a more concrete timeframe that makes it easier to understand.

### [Listen to the scientists](#)

“We know that most politicians don't want to talk to us. Good, we don't want to talk to them either [laughter and applause]. We want them to talk to the scientists instead” (FridaysForFuture, 2019c, 0:50). She says that it is ok if people do not want to listen to them since they are only children repeating the message of the united climate science (see e.g. Thunberg, 2019). At a strike in Vancouver, Severn Cullis-Suzuki who spoke at the Summit in 1992 in Rio stood beside her, and Thunberg quoted what Severn said as a 12-year-old which is very similar to what Thunberg speaks of. The science has been there for three decades. She also spoke about her future, market, that the leaders are being greedy and not sharing, and that this is what she was taught not to do in school. She was ignored then, and Thunberg and the strikers are being ignored now (CBS News, 2019b). She is repeating what the scientists are saying, openly addressing this and says that she does not want the leaders to listen to her. She wants them to listen to the scientists. She shows vulnerability by saying that she is not anyone special. She does not claim to be a genius, or the only solution. This makes her more appealing and relatable since she does not claim to be better than the normal person. It also makes her replaceable since it is not her research, and people have said the same before. Many would find that as a weakness, if they are aiming for power, like many charismatic leaders are. But she does not want that. Showing vulnerability by saying that she is replaceable is not such a bad thing for her. Her goal is not power, it is to create broad public awareness and get the politicians to act according to the Paris Agreement. This will be explored further in chapter 5.4. and 5.5.

The other frames are regarding what is the right thing to do and that people should care. In the scientific frame, she is presenting the science behind her arguments, and that they should not listen to her, but to the scientists. Her accusations on why the leaders are not listening to science were presented earlier: they are afraid of being unpopular and the facts are uncomfortable. In this frame she speaks of the science, not the reasoning why she thinks people do not listen or act based on this. This frame is closely connected to the other frames since this is the foundation of her arguments. This is the foundation for what she defines as morally acceptable, that the older generation has stolen her future, and that their empty rhetoric does not mean anything since she knows the science and facts.



By demonstrating that she understands the climate science, she is increasing her power, since she shows her knowledge. She shows that she understands these facts and can hold the leaders accountable since she knows what the leaders are doing. She becomes a ‘watchdog’. Saying that she is repeating the best available science, she is legitimizing her argument by authorization and saying that there are many on her side. It is the same as when she says how many the school strikers are and saying ‘we’ instead of ‘I’. Even though she is usually speaking physically alone, she shows that she is not alone by saying how many school strikers there are, and that this is the numbers from the best scientists on the field. They are all becoming the watchdog, holding the leaders accountable.

#### 5.2.6. Comparison of the speeches

It does not seem to matter where she was speaking or when. There is not much difference in the frames she uses, despite having different audiences or as time goes by. Many of the frames overlap, and most of the frames are not used in a specific order, they are all connected with bits and pieces from start to end. The frame that stands the most out, is the scientific frame. When she uses this, there are often paragraph(s) with only this frame. However, she sometimes does this with some of the other frames as well, but not as often. Also, the scientific frame is the only one that is not her evaluation or opinion, therefore it is more natural that the other frames overlap and are intertwined. It does not seem to be a consistent pattern in the structure of the speeches. The IPCC report and the Paris Agreement are the foundation of her arguments. She has said that she will strike until Sweden acts in line with the Paris Agreement which was the reason she started to strike. She uses the scientific frame in every speech, and as mentioned, her message seems to always be that they should listen to the science and the scientists. The one standing out, is the speech at Katowice in 2018, where she only says this sentence: “We need to keep the fossil fuels in the ground and we need to focus on equity” (Thunberg, 2018, 2:45). And still, I would argue that this is not so much within the scientific frame. She mentions fossil fuel, and that is why it is included in this frame, but it is more within the moral prophet frame, since she is telling us what to do, not repeating science or saying that we should listen to scientists. Since she is always telling us to listen to the scientists and focus on the science, it is surprising that she did not include more of this frame in this speech. It is one of her first speeches, at the COP 24 in Katowice. It is one of her shortest speeches, only lasting 03.19 minutes. She does speak of us running out of time in this speech, which is included that in the scientific frame as well. However, this frame is not as present in this speech, compared to the other speeches. Another speech that stands out, is the one in Davos in January 2020.

It is the latest speech in this research and she hardly uses the scientific frame. When speaking of 1,5 degrees and emissions, it seems like she does not say this to inform them of what is happening, she explains that the goals cannot be achieved if they continue to speak of lower instead of stopping emissions. This is more within the frames of empty rhetoric and moral prophet. One reason for her not focusing so much on the scientific frame in this speech might be because she thinks that they already know. As she has said many times, the science has been there for decades, she is only repeating it. This was the speech where she came with her and other climate activists' demands to the participants of WEF. Maybe she wanted to focus more on what they should do, then what is happening since she has repeated the science for a year.

As time goes by, she seems more comfortable speaking. Her tone changes slightly between when she is speaking at climate summits with decision makers in the audience, and when she is at strikes. Even though the speeches are very similar. For instance, she often says 'change is coming whether you like it or not'. In Katowice 2018, she says this at the end with a monotone voice (FridaysForFuture, 2018), and after her more emotional speech at the UN in NY in September 2019, she was still saying this at the end, with a more monotone voice than what she had said earlier in the emotional speech (PBS NewsHour, 2019), while at the strikes in Vancouver and Montreal, she says the same phrase with a less monotone tone, and it seems more motivating and joyful. She seems more positive when she speaks at strikes, she smiles more, and does not speak as monotone as she does at summits (see e.g. CBS News, 2019a vs. Thunberg, 2019). She always has her speech on a paper which she reads from which might make her tone more monotone since she does not speak freely. The strikes are outside, it is often windy, and the audience is cheering a lot more, so she must speak over a lot of sound which can influence that her tone is not as monotone as in summits. At summits she is inside, and the applause or cheers are small if there are any at all, and not as often and loud as at strikes.

She only refers to the critique she and the school strikers at the end of 2019 and in 2020 which is not surprising since she has gotten more critique as time goes by (see e.g. Guardian News, 2020). She generates laughter from the audience in some of her speeches. This is most evident in Montreal where she has a clear set up for her joke. She compares Canada and Sweden. That Canada has moose; Sweden has moose. Canada has cold winters and plays ice hockey; Sweden has cold winters and plays ice hockey. Canada have maple syrup; "and we have — well, forget about that one [laughter]" (CBS News, 2019a, 3:16).

Her goal is the same now as when she started since nothing has really changed when it comes to the leaders and sustainability. When she uses the same phrases, wordings, and frames in the different speeches it is neither surprising nor negative. Social media is important, especially amongst her followers. By saying many of the same phrases, these become catchphrases and twitter-friendly since you cannot write a long paragraph on Twitter. Her catchphrases can therefore easily be used as memes, posters or pictures with quotes that can be spread in social media and used on posters at strikes. This can be ‘Our house is on fire’, ‘How dare you?’ and ‘Treat this crisis like a crisis’ etc. These are also what she critiques the leaders for focusing on and she therefore will not say it in January 2020, since she wants them to focus on the science instead (Guardian News, 2020).

### Climate imaginaries

The strength of a climate imaginary depends on how it appeals to the interests of a wide range of groups, and how it aligns with technological and economic structures. It does not seem like Thunberg expresses attractive visions which seem appealing to wide groups when it comes to the climate. She has activated thousands of youths, but she does not seem to appeal to businesses and governments, since not much has changed since she started. The politicians in power might know what to do, but do not know how to be re-elected after doing it. She does communicate a catastrophic future if we do not do what we can now, but she does express a value regime of being able to look your children in their eyes since you have done enough. She does not speak of a utopic future where everyone grows their own food or are living off the land. She does not speak much of the practicality of the everyday life of normal people. She does demand a system change which is not based on capitalistic and consumerist values, but she does not paint a picture of a world if the leaders act according to the IPCC report. She only speaks of what will happen if we do not. How governments and organizations respond to climate change might be shaped by the dominating climate imaginaries. By trying to convince us on which climate imaginary is the morally acceptable one and which values we should have, she tries to get the audience to imagine a new vision for policies, the industry, and people. How strong this imaginary is depends on how it appeals to people. It seems like the hardest might be to envision the technological and economic structures in this new system she speaks of, since we as of now rely on the current and unsustainable systems, which she acknowledges. She says that it will not be easy, and that even though we do not know how to ‘build the ceiling’, we must start now and try. It seems like she is mostly in line with the sustainable lifestyle imaginary, but that we must create a system which can facilitate a sustainable lifestyle.

As mentioned, when she focuses on cultural values to steer our climate policies, this can have a great effect and long-term effect. She promotes values such as caring about something bigger than us, protecting the future, caring for others, empathy, equity, and community. By joining her and her cause, they are working towards a mutual goal, not only an individual goal.

#### Frames she does not use

It is interesting to compare her frames with what previous research on climate communication suggests works and not. As presented, they conclude that it should be framed in a positive way. Thunberg seems to focus mostly on the negative aspects of climate change, and what will happen if we do not act. Not on the possibilities we have by going into a greener world. It does not seem like she focuses on the health benefits of sustainability which can be related to the sustainable lifestyle imaginary at all. Even though she speaks of people dying, that we are facing air pollution etc., she does not use the heart and health frame. She does not argue that we as individuals must do these things to get a better health. She is criticizing the ones in power, not explaining the concrete consequences of how this works. She does mention that this will affect everyone. She uses the frame somewhat when speaking of their grandchildren, saying that these will be affected. She connects climate change with family. It seems like the benefits of a sustainable world are taken for granted in her speeches. She focuses on the bad consequences of climate change, with phrases like 'sixth mass extinction' and 'the end of our civilization' and says that we do not have much time. She is not there to tell the healthy benefits of sustainability, she is telling them why it is a bad strategy to ignore it, but that we do still have time to turn this around. She does not use the opportunity frame focusing on the gains rather than the losses either. The opportunity frame is in line with the techno-market imaginary, which she criticizes in her speeches. Thunberg does not use this frame which is interesting since it is the frame Stoknes claim is one of the most important and efficient ones. But has she made people take sustainable actions? A positive framing can make people act and live more sustainably. Thunberg might have engaged people, but not necessarily to get more climate friendly. She has engaged them to show their discontent with the leaders. This can off course make the people of the movement become more climate friendly by joining the strikes and follow her message, and she has given the climate debate more attention which can have made more people aware. However, the shaming of the leaders, and the lack of positive possibility framing directed at the leaders have not necessarily made the leaders act more sustainably. The power of the movement might. However, this must be researched more thoroughly in a separate research that focuses on the participants of the movement.

This research cannot conclude if Thunberg has made people more sustainable, or if she has only given the climate cause focus and mobilized many to show their discontent with the leaders.

As mentioned, the frames that are mostly used but should not be used according to previous research are: Catastrophe, destruction, uncertainty, costs, high price, loss, and sacrifice, which is in line with the climate apocalypse imaginary. However, it seems like Thunberg is using a lot of them when talking of destruction, suffering, money as the bad guy and the economic system that should be completely changed in her eyes. She does not present climate change as a great business opportunity, but explicitly says that we cannot rely on the market to fix this or build and buy our way out of it. She also criticizes the luxury consumerism in the financially fortunate part of the world. She might be shaming us into not being able to deny or have dissonance. By simplifying, speaking in black and white and having millions of strikers with her, she might make it harder to ignore and deny climate change. Her message could be said with a gain perspective instead of a loss perspective. Instead of saying 'if we continue as we do now, we will reach tipping points that will lead to the end of our civilization', she could have a gain perspective saying that 'reducing further changes in the climate helps defend against the reaching of certain tipping points', in line with what precious research suggests. Her having a loss perspective can be in line with her black and white rhetoric, and she has said that she wants us to panic, and that she will not give us hope. She wants us to pull the emergency break and act as if we are in a crisis. It is therefore not surprising that she uses the loss perspective. Even if other climate communication scientists suggest having a gain perspective, Thunberg has obviously been very successful in her message. The combination of the frames and who she is might be the key. This will be explored further in chapter 5.4. and 5.5., and somewhat when speaking of the distance barrier in the following.

### 5.3. Does she crush the barriers?

Beck et al. claimed that we are facing a scapegoat-society where the ones pointing out the threat, is the ones causing people to get upset, not the threat itself. Attacking the accuser is a strategy to restore image or limit the feeling of responsibility, by for example trying to reduce the credibility of the accuser. She has gotten a lot of critique, and this can confirm the scapegoat-society. This is also in line with the mental barriers. People would rather filter in the information that confirms their identity and beliefs and filter out what does not. If climate change is something you would like to avoid, belittling, criticising and make fun of the messenger might be a strategy to avoid the topic and feel less guilty. The only barrier she seems to tackle, is the distance barrier and not so much dissonance, denial, doom, and identity.

### Dissonance and denial

It seems like the premise of her speeches is that they all know the facts, and that they all now that we are in a crisis but choose to ignore it. Or that they are not aware, but that is because they have not done their homework. They should know about it, since they are the leaders and therefore have the power to choose how the world should go on. She does not tackle the dissonance barrier, nor the denial barrier. It seems like she does not bother to waste the time on them. When asked on 'Ellen' if she would meet up with Trump, she answered that she did not see the point, that she could not possibly tell him something that he hadn't already heard (TheEllenShow, 2019). On the Daily show she said that in the US, they discussed if climate change was real or not, which she was not used to. She was used to climate change as a fact (The Daily Show, 2019). Her pragmatic intent is to get the decision-makers to act in line with the Paris Agreement. She wants to let them now that she knows what they are doing. Not convince the deniers about science that has been there for three decades. Dissonance and denial are probably something she cannot influence a lot, but she might have contributed to the fact that her followers do not accept this with others.

### Doom and identity

She is speaking of catastrophe and possibly contributing to the doom barrier which is in line with the climate apocalypse imaginary. However, she says that we still have time to fix this, which can give hope. Even though she is presenting a negative future with destruction and doom within a decade or two, she says that we can have another future if we act now. People can change this around since they are powerful and will fight. When it comes to identity, she does not address the specifics of individual choices and identity. She criticizes capitalism, consumerism and those living in luxury. However, by not getting into the specifics of people's everyday life and their consequences, she does not contribute to the identity barrier. She only says that she is vegan and has a shop stop in her interviews, this is not something she brings up in her speeches. She only says this when asked. She has not said that she is extraordinary for doing this or mentioned it at all in her speeches or shaming those who are not making the same sustainable choices. Even though her moral prophet frame is harsh on the leaders, she does not seem to point a moral finger against people in general on how they should live their lives. This can make her more likable since it can be hard to see the point of changing your lightbulb when the state is focusing on oil. She promotes the sustainable lifestyle imaginary but does not go into details on what people should do and not. Except from the leaders off course, but this is also on a structural level. People can use the identity barrier to avoid anything having to do with climate change due to the associations they have beforehand.

Promoting cultural values and making the moral evaluation can make people want to be a part of that imaginary, and that they want to create an identity for themselves with the values of empathy, responsibility, and universalism. However, those wanting to live in luxury are probably feeling criticized by her, even though the critique is very general, and not specific. I assume that if she were criticizing people's everyday life in concrete ways, saying that they should stop eating meat, stop flying, have a shop stop etc., she might not have had as many followers since they would have felt criticized. Even though she has done these things, she is not criticizing them, which can reduce the distance they might feel towards her.

### Distance

What seems to be the barrier she tackles the most, is the distance barrier. She is in the empty rhetoric frame blaming the leaders for having vague and distant dates. She on the other hand is speaking of close and concrete dates. She says that we do not have much time, since the crisis is already here. She brings climate change closer when saying that the world is currently on fire, while there were massive forest fires in Australia. The crisis is not here in many years, it is here now. One of the critiques the climate movement has gotten, is that it does not seem to influence people's lives when they speak of for example saving the polar bears. Thunberg says that this will affect everyone, and that they are fighting for everyone's future, here and now. In that regard, it is more about global justice than an isolated problem. She is connecting nature and the social world and makes climate change more understandable by using metaphors and saying that it will affect everyone. She also brings it closer to the youths' lives when saying that the leaders have stolen their future. She brings it close to them by saying that they are the victims of the leaders' unsustainable choices and gives them the tools to show their discontent by striking. She makes it closer to the older generations lives by bringing in their children and grandchildren in her speeches, connecting their family with climate change.

The scientific facts can create more distance to her and climate change since most people do not understand this nor can relate to the melting of permafrost in the Arctic. They can therefore feel a distance to climate change if they do not understand it and distance to Thunberg since she is using complicated terms. Thunberg does explain the changes and does bring it somewhat closer to people's lives. However, she does not explain the direct and close consequences. Such as asthma due to air pollution etc. She says that people are dying and suffering, but not actually explaining how, or what the connection between 'living in luxury' and 'feedback loops' is. When the scientific frame is used in combination with the other frames, this can give her more power and credibility, since she shows that she knows what she is talking about.

Using metaphors like ‘our house is on fire’ makes it closer to us as well since she simplifies it and gives examples of something we can relate to. The atmosphere and ‘in many years’ might be too big and too abstract. Comparing it to our house makes it a problem for everyone since it is *our* and closer since it is a *house*, which most of us have. The ‘bad guys’ have also been concretized to some extent. She is saying that everyone is to blame, but that some have more responsibility than others and comes with concrete examples of some countries’ emission contribution to the crisis. Even though she does say that everyone must change, she is also saying that humans have not failed, and their focus should be on putting pressure on the leaders. You are not the bad guy if you do not change your lightbulb, the leaders are the bad guys for not focusing on climate change and not changing a system that contributes to making the climate crisis worse. This makes it less abstract and more observable. Even though the leaders, the media and the system are still not very concrete since it is about many people and a whole system, it is still a definition of who the bad guys are, that the people and especially the young ones are the victims. The path to change is that the people are aware and can put pressure on the leaders, such as joining the school strikes. The strikes are every Friday, which makes it more predictable, and can therefore be easier to join. Some of the strikes are bigger events, but Thunberg always strikes on Fridays.

The social aspect is an important force behind action. If people around us are making sustainable choices such as taking the train instead of the plane, it is a bigger chance that others make more sustainable choices. If people are seeing the movement and the strikers, they might see that there is something wrong since so many are discontent. In that way, her speeches might not be what is creating the biggest feeling of closeness to the cause, it might be her actions, and that she has showed people that they can act and be heard. She has presented people with a concrete way of showing their discontent, by joining the Fridays For Future school strike. She has given them a tool to work together, a community and responsibility. She has given them a concrete way of being part of something bigger, which previous research suggests is effectful. This might be an easier way into meeting more environmentally friendly people which again might help people become more environmentally friendly in their values and actions. Even though most people are not speaking at UN summits etc., she is still striking every Friday, encouraging people to join her. She is doing what she wants everyone else to do. She does not expect them to do anything else then what she is doing herself. She is giving them a tool on how they can show their support for sustainability, and discontent with the powerful.



By being one of the ones she defines as the victims also makes the message clearer. She is not an old rich person speaking of the young and vulnerable. She is one of those who will be affected. And still, she speaks of the ones more unfortunate than her, saying that she is aware that she is one of the lucky ones. She shows emotions, showing that climate change is something she really cares about. This makes her more relatable for others as well. She is not a calculated politician with a strategy. It seems like she genuinely cares. This will be explored further in chapter 5.4.

She is not focused on herself or that she should be a leader. She wants the leaders to listen to the experts, not her. While other charismatic leaders have focused on themselves as the only solution, she seems to not want that. She does not want to be put up on a pedestal but make the people aware that if even 'a 16-year-old schoolgirl from Sweden' can be heard, they can as well, and that they are equal. She refers to herself as well when speaking of the strikers and the people by saying 'we'. This makes her more relatable. The distance to her as a person or a symbol is reduced, and the chance is bigger for someone seeing themselves doing what she does, since they are similar. They can relate more to her when she seems more like them.

She is in a unique position since she does not care about being popular, she does not have anyone she benefits from, such as an organization that would like to get power in elections. She only speaks at her own risk. Even though she is also a representative of Fridays For Future, it is to a degree a one-cause-movement, not a political party. She does not have to make compromises. She does not have any decision-making-power, so all the responsibility is on the leaders. This is also why she can speak as strongly without compromising. She is a young girl, not gaining anything from this, except a more sustainable world if she makes a difference. Nevertheless, this will benefit everyone, not just her. Her being a child allows her to identify the problem and say that they must fix it. Adult activists might not have the same possibility. They might be criticized for not having the solution, but since she is a child, she can get away with it. Even though she has been criticized of not having a concrete and detailed plan, which she addresses in the speeches.

She did not have a position that could help her when she first started. Her mother had around 40.000 followers on twitter, and she shared the post of her daughter sitting outside the Parliament which probably helped spread the word. Still, her political power was limited, and she was still not a famous person. She was a young girl and not an expert, not rich nor did she have many followers. However, this could be a strength in her case.

If she were an expert, she might not have been taken seriously if she showed emotions like at the NY summit. She could have been called ‘hysterical’ and that this could have clouded her research.

Her lack of political power when she started might have been a resource in her case. She was just a schoolgirl from Sweden. She showed that she did what she could, even if it was very little. This is more relatable than donating millions of dollars to the climate cause, investing in green companies, or inventing new sustainable solutions. She simply did not go to school and sat outside the Parliament with a homemade sign. A simple and concrete act. If she did that with the small probability of having an effect, then no one has an excuse to be passive. She did not start because she knew that she was going to inspire many across the globe. She is still just a schoolgirl from Sweden who wanted to do whatever it took to look herself in the eyes. She has been consistent and therefore authentic. Even though the movement became international, her sign is still homemade and in Swedish. It looks like the same sign she started out with. She even sailed across the Atlantic Ocean with it. This is a reminder of where she came from. Her goals have not changed, and it can signify that she has not changed despite gaining fame.

She is also very humble. She says that it is an honour being at strikes (CBS News, 2019c). She dresses casually with oversized hoodies, a plaid or simple colored informal shirt, no makeup, braids, or a low ponytail. She does not fly around in private jets or speak on behalf of a rich company or political party. She does not claim to be at a higher standard than the strikers. She has brought up local climate activists and constantly tells everyone that they should listen to the scientists, not her. She reminds us that she is not special. This resource of being a ‘nobody’ will be explored further when discussing charismatic leadership in chapter 5.5. First, an exploration of her rhetorical appeals.

#### 5.4. Thunberg’s appeals

Her rhetorical utterances are attempts to convince people to stand up against injustice, and she wants the leaders to act responsibly. Her past directed rhetoric is her attempt to convince that the leaders have failed us the last decades, since they have ignored the science and climate change. The crisis is now bigger than it should be because the leaders chose to look away. She is trying to convince us that the same is happening now, which is the present directed rhetoric. The leaders ignore the science and steals from the young generation. She tells us that we should not be ok with this. We can make a change, and we should because this is wrong.

The leaders should act responsibly. She uses future directed rhetoric when saying that it is wrong to focus on money and steal from the future generation. We should only look at the emission curve, and act sustainably. We should come together as people and demand action from our leaders.

#### Ethos – appeal to the speaker’s credibility

When analysing her ethos, this research cannot say how people perceive her. The focus is on how she is portraying herself and what aspects can influence her credibility. Thunberg’s credibility and if she is someone we can trust is low when it comes to the scientific frame. She is replaceable since it has been used before, and she is not saying anything new. She is not an expert on the topic. However, she is not claiming to be an expert. She does not want to be heard, she wants them to listen to the scientists, and says that she is repeating their science. She refers to the IPCC report which is a gathering of the best available science and is referring to which page she was quoting. She is legitimizing her arguments by authorization, and using credible sources increases her credibility. When it comes to the generational justice frame, the arguments would probably not have been as strong as if she were a middle-aged man. She is a part of the generation she speaks on behalf of and those she has defined as the victims of climate change. She has not been a big contributor to climate change yet. She started to live more sustainably when she found out about climate change at a very young age. She did not choose to live a life in luxury, with private jets and a jet set lifestyle for many years before she decided to become a climate activist. When she says that the young ones are the victims, and that the older generation are stealing their future, it holds more ground since she is a part of that generation that are the victims, not the generation with ‘the bad guys’. This can also be the argument for the moral prophet frame. She is representing the future since she will outlive most of the leaders due to her young age. When it comes to the empty rhetoric frame, she can be replaceable. This is not a very new frame, however, her Asperger’s might have made her ‘black and white’-view stronger. She is persistent and does not care about being popular. Therefore, few would have dared to call the leaders out on their inactions. Which also is the case for the power shift frame. If she did not have Asperger’s, she might not have had the persistence to take on a fight as big as she has, or use such a straightforward rhetoric, not worrying about what people might think. She seems secure when speaking. She does not seem nervous and often reads from a paper. She does not shake nor seems to be sweating. She got emotional in some of the speeches. By showing personal engagement the speaker can be perceived as honest and engaged in the cause.

She is tough by speaking the way she is at the leaders but shows vulnerability by showing emotions. When getting angry or sad, her ethos is strengthened. Even though she gets emotional, it seems appropriate and suitable for the utterance. She got both sad and angry when speaking of the destruction of the planet, and when saying 'how dare you' when claiming that the leaders have stolen her dreams and childhood. This strengthens both the moral prophet frame and the generational justice frame since most people would argue that making a girl cry, is not morally acceptable, and it would be worse if an adult made a girl cry. When she is crying since the leaders have made unsustainable decisions, saying that this is unfair and morally wrong of them and this affects her generation the most, she is showing how it affects her emotionally now, not only theoretically or in the future. Up until that point (April 2019), she might have seen more robotic and monotone in her speeches. As mentioned, she seems more comfortable speaking and not as monotone and 'robotic' as time goes by. Which is not surprising since she gets more and more practice. When a young teenager quotes complicated numbers and goes up against some of the world's most powerful, it can be easy to forget that she is just a girl, not an invincible robot or an emotionless symbol. The climate crisis will affect her and the other young ones more than the older generation which she is speaking to at summits. She can seem more trustworthy since she is speaking of her own generation and does not represent anyone else. Of course, this can have the opposite effect as well. If someone is criticising her for being young and therefore does not understand due to her age, getting emotional and being young can damage her credibility in the camp of the criticisers.

With her parents being performers, one could imagine that she knows how to stage herself, put on a performance and create a character that would suit the part. It is however doubtful. As a child she got depressed, stopped speaking and went vegan. It is not likely that she was someone's pawn and could fake that as a 9-year-old. It is also doubtful that someone could have foreseen how big this movement was going to get. It would be surprising if someone decided to use a child as a pawn, telling her to sit outside the Swedish Parliament alone, or pretending to be depressed and have selective mutism at 9 years old due to climate change. If she became someone's pawn after a while, we would probably see some changes in her appearance or speeches if they wanted to influence her in some direction. She does not seem to have changed since she started. Using the same frames is an indication of that. If she truly is someone's puppet, it would probably have been proven by now, almost two years later, since many have criticised her, yet they have not been able to give proof. It is therefore doubtful that she is putting on a show. She seems to be authentic. Her devotion started long before struck alone.

She has been consistent which gives her more moral integrity and credibility. It was not a trend she wanted to join because it seemed fun, nor something someone paid her to do. She made sustainable choices when it only affected her and her family. She does not gain anything by doing this or represent an organization or a political party. She has donated her prize money to charities, and she does not fly in private jets around the world buying expensive new clothes. She acts according to what she says. Her sailing across the Atlantic Ocean drew attention to her and the cause as well. One thing is travelling by train in Europe, but to use a couple of weeks to sail across the ocean is not what most people would do, when flying is easy.

People seem to be holding her to a higher standard. Such as when she posted a photo of a crowded train where she sat on the floor, and people criticized her since they had seen her in a seat on a train. She had to address the critique, saying that yes, she had had a seat in some of the travels, but that on that particular train, she had to sit on the floor. And she thought it was great that the train was full, instead of people flying (Sandberg, 2019). What would happen if people saw her eating a beef burger? Or if she flew? Would her message lose its strength? The science would still be the same. That the critiques are often aimed at her moral integrity is another indication that this is in fact one of her greatest strengths. If this is being attacked, it is an indicator that her moral integrity is a big threat. Her being the symbol of the movement might be a great strength since she is observable and dedicated to the cause. However, it can also be a weakness. If she did take a plane, this could reduce her moral integrity, and this could be reflected upon the movement. Or what happens if she quits? The organization Fridays For Future might live on since there are many local organizers around the world. However, her being present in the media have made it easier to see the effects on climate activism. She has become a famous climate activist. When she travels around at strikes, more people show up to that place. If people lose interest when she stops doing it is yet to be seen. Still, the activism around the world inspired by her is remarkable, so it is likely that it would continue, even if it might be at a smaller scale, not having her as the unifying symbol.

Even if she is living very sustainably, you could criticize her for using the internet to communicate with her followers. The internet is responsible for emissions, and it seems like she is relying on it. Since her knowledge and understanding on climate change and emissions seems to be both broad and deep, it can be assumed that she is aware of the emission of the internet. However, as mentioned before, she does not come with concrete solutions to people everyday life. This can also be criticized, but her focus is on the leaders and system change.

She criticizes the system for relying on emissions, so even though she is responsible for emissions by using the internet to promote her cause, this might be seen as a necessary evil. If she were criticizing people for eating meat for example, it could be hypocritical of her to use the internet, which could reduce her credibility. However, she is not doing that. She is criticizing the system for relying on emissions. When we are all a part of that system, we must rather make changes to the system, so that it does not rely on emissions anymore.

She does not have a company that makes money from her, she does not make money holding speeches or traveling around, and the books she has contributed to gives the income to charities, and she has donated prize money to charities. She refused to accept an award from the Nordic Council because the climate movement does not need awards, it needs leaders who listen to science as mentioned in the introduction. This contributes to her being extraordinary and increases her moral integrity since she shows that she is not doing it for the money. The cause is bigger than she is. In the generation of snowflakes and prestige through achievements, getting international awards is desired by many. Not taking it for herself increases her status and integrity. She and her foundation were awarded by Human Act for her global activism with 100.000 USD. She gave this to support UNICEF's work with protecting children from the COVID-19 pandemic. She said that the coronavirus pandemic is a child-rights crisis, like the climate crisis. It will impact vulnerable groups the most, and children will be affected now and long-term (UNICEF, 2020). She brings up equity in her speeches, and speaks of those who are not being heard, vulnerable groups, poorer countries, and children. Even though she seemed single-minded by focusing on climate change, seeing in black and white, claiming that it is very simple etc., she is still presenting the cause as complex. Her giving the money to help children is not off brand, even if it was not to an environmental cause. The pandemic is an extraordinary and urgent threat to the young and vulnerable. Climate change in her eyes is a child-rights issue and aligns with the generational justice frame. This shows that she is not one-tracked-minded on just climate change, and even though she says that this is simple and black and white, she does see the complexity in the issues.

#### Pathos – appeal to the audience's emotions

Bringing in the audiences children and grandchildren makes that cause closer to them and brings up emotions since they are probably emotionally invested in their children and grandchildren. Fear is also an emotion she provokes when talking about destruction, sufferings, and the end of our civilization. This has been used a lot in climate communication before, as mentioned earlier. She does say that we do have time left, so she is still balancing the fear with hope.

However, fear might lead to the feeling of being powerless and using the doom barrier. When she tries to balance it out with saying that we can still fix this, and the people have power, it might work. She is not only focusing on the fear and destruction. Even though she is balancing it out, a risk might be that people are so fed up with the bad news, so this can lead to someone not wanting to listen to her. She brings the seriousness into it when speaking of the destruction, and the hope when speaking of the power the people have, and that there is still time. She also seems more hopeful when speaking at strikes. She has a little bit more focus on the fear and the destruction when speaking at summits with leaders in the audience. The difference is however small. Participating in the strikes can lay the ground for an emotional small rhetorical situation. The participants are in a 'fighting mood' where they want to stand up against injustice, chanting, booing and applauding, and when thousands or hundreds of thousands are there together for the same cause, this can contribute to the feeling of hope and solidarity. Said in other words: it would be more impactful to be a part of that strike hearing her speak, than sitting at home looking at it on the phone. The feeling of solidarity is bigger when they are present there, for the same cause. She appeals to their emotions by relating to their families and getting emotional herself. Using common experiences such as the burning of Notre Dame and the fires in Australia she can create an emotional bond to her audience, which can make the message more impactful since they are already affected by those fires.

#### Logos – appeal to the audience's reason

Logos is the appeal to the audience's reason, through factual reasoning. As described, she refers to scientific research, and it is hard to argue against that it is not fair for children to clean up after the adults. However, the conflict comes when some people do not see the need for the children to clean up, since they think there is nothing to clean up. They do not believe in human made climate change for example. When using the moral prophet frame, she says that it is wrong for some to suffer so others can live in luxury. We can choose to change this injustice, or we can choose to contribute to the destruction and sufferings. This is part of her legitimizing her claims through rationalization of what is right and wrong. She makes moral evaluations and legitimizes through rationalization by saying that children should not clean up the leaders' mess. When using the generational justice frame, she argues that the leaders have left the young ones with a world in crisis. Most would agree that this is unfair. If everyone agrees that it is true, is another story. In the power shift frame, she claims that the leaders have failed. They are avoiding this crisis since they do not want to be unpopular, and this is not a reasonable prioritization. If the system is the problem, then the system must be changed.

She wants the leaders to be honest and speak clearly. And when using the scientific frame, she wants the leaders to listen to the science. To trust the best available science, and act so we have the least amount of suffering and destruction possible. All of these are attempts to legitimize her statements, and appeal to the audience's reason. She is saying what she thinks is right and wrong and explains why.

What the speaker and audience take for granted is an important aspect with logos. Often, it is only the implicit reasons that appeal to reason. The taken-for-granted-truths in her speeches are that people would not want other people or ecosystems to die. A vital taken-for-granted truth in her argument is that we can trust science. If people do not believe in science or believe that the experts are right, then the argument of listening to the scientists does not make sense. Listening to scientists is one of her key arguments. It is also that climate change is real, and human made. It is taken for granted that we want a future, that the young ones deserve the same chances and that you would rescue a child facing a threat. Life is worth living and death is bad. She says that people are dying, and all you think of is money, how dare you? The implicit reason for people dying is so that some can live in luxury. The implicit reason for people dying and that climate change is worsening is due to capitalism and consumerism. If people think that it is better that people are dying than not getting to eat the finest steak at a fancy restaurant, this argument would not hold its ground. She sometimes says this explicitly as well, that people are dying so that some can live in luxury. She is trying to create a topos, a common ground on what should be morally acceptable.

### 5.5. The uniqueness of being 'just a schoolgirl' – charismatic leadership

Thunberg has created a new position of leadership and tries to create new definitions of the situation. To be able to make a causal connection between abstract values and concrete solutions to the crisis, there must be some assumptions of causality in the political culture. Since the science on climate change has existed for decades, and it has been an increased focus on the political arena and in the media, it is safe to assume that most people know something about the causality of their actions. This makes the hope for salvations through an extraordinary person plausible.

She has easy access to the strikers through social media and asks them to demonstrate and showing the leaders that they are a force to be reckoned with. The easy access to the followers simplifies the mobilization. While climate activism for a long time was about how individuals should change their light bulb etc., she focuses on how individuals can get together to be heard.



Then they can make the leaders accountable for their (in)actions. She is shifting the responsibility from the individuals to the leaders and systems.

It must be culturally plausible to influence human faith and that these powers can be the qualities of a person. As mentioned, she did not appear in a vacuum. For a long time, there has been more focus, and more discontent with the lack of climate action. There has been an increased focus in education, political discussions, and the media. It could have been a coincidence that she was the one who started it. A local environmental group planned on doing something to bring awareness to climate change, her method was used before, and she was just one girl to begin with. This was the latent charismatic situation. People are willing to listen, and the internet has contributed to easier communication and the sharing of information. In Sweden they had a well implemented sustainable focus in the educational system. The Swedish values of independence and speaking up against injustice was personified in Pippi Longstocking, Bamse and Olof Palme. And now Greta Thunberg.

The latent charismatic situation became manifest when the applicant for leadership (Thunberg) had a promise of salvation (holding the leaders accountable if they do not reduce climate change) that is perceived to be appropriate to solve the crisis (climate change). She is not asking to be a decision maker, but she demands to be heard to change the priorities of the leaders. Her promise of salvation is to not give up until she is heard and until the leaders have made concrete plans to reach the Paris Agreement and hold the leaders accountable. Charismatic leaders address ultimate values such as: honor, survival, justice, and self-respect. The pursuit of ultimate values is the charismatic mission, not the practical solution of everyday problems. She speaks of justice for the climate, species and the earth, survival, honorable and respectful behavior when she asks them if they feel ashamed, how they dare to look away and how they can look their children in the eyes, choosing to fail.

She attacks the existing status quo and tries to create a monopoly over ideology and what is morally right and wrong. Even though she constantly reminds us that she is just a schoolgirl, she does have some extraordinary qualities. Thunberg has a sense of duty, or personal devotion to the cause, which are all signs of a charismatic leader. Thunberg started out alone because she did not agree on the method with the local environmentalist-group. She has Asperger's and was not comfortable in social settings. That she is the face of a huge movement is therefore ironic. Many could try to hide their diagnosis, but she openly describes it as a superpower. She does not seem to want sympathy due to her diagnosis since she speaks of it as a superpower.

She is a young girl using simple logic. Why go to school to educate herself about a world that will not exist in the future? She tries to change what is structurally possible and demands new forms of organizations and modes of conduct from the ones in power. She does not accept that they continue to ignore their commitments to the Paris Agreement. But she does not do it to become a leader. She wants them to do their job and act responsibly so she can go back to school. She does not accept their hopes of endless economic growth, or their empty promises when the goals of the Paris Agreement are not being met at all.

One of the characteristics of a charismatic leader is that they claim ultimate authority, and willingly demands it. This does not seem to be her goal. She has several times said that the leaders should not listen to her, they should listen to what the experts have said all along. She asks to go back to school, but that she cannot if the leaders do not take the climate crisis seriously. She does however say that the climate crisis should be our focus. In that regard, she claims ultimate ideological and ethical authority over a sustainable ideology. Not for herself to lead, but that climate should be the main goal. She pursues ultimate values, not the practical solution of everyday problems, which is typical for charismatic leaders. When she defines the crisis and solutions, she knows how to solve it since she has ultimate authority over the definition of the problem. She has a revolutionary force that can change attitude and directions of action, in line with charismatic leadership. Even though people have known about climate change before, she might have made it harder to ignore and avoid by giving it so much attention.

She does try to change the social system to get the people to realize that they have more power and wants us to change the economic system completely since no current economic system nor political policy are equipped to tackle the climate changes. Capitalism and its constant hunger for economic growth and competition should stop, and the focus should be on sustainability. She wants us to move away from the fossil fuels forever imaginary, and the techno-market imaginary. She uses aspects of the climate apocalypse imaginary but seems to want us to go into a more sustainable lifestyle imaginary and focus on a simpler, less materialistic life with sustainable consumption. These are the values she is trying to direct us into.

She constantly proves her importance by being invited to summits, being heard, and getting awards. She is often in the news, but this is normally not in interviews. It is usually when she has held speeches or gotten an award. It does not seem like she wants to have a lot of focus on her, but that the focus should be on climate change, which fits her message and her credibility. She has not become a climate activist for fame, she is genuinely committed to the cause.

She does have some sarcastic comments such as when she says that they can trust her when she says that her being there telling them to panic will not lead to anything. Using sarcasm can be an indication that she is aware that she is an outsider to the political establishment. Being an outsider fits the charismatic ideal type. The sarcastic comments can be an indication that she is aware that she is an outsider. She says that being different is a strength and points out that she is different. This is also the case when she says that it is ok that the leaders do not listen to her since she after all is just a schoolgirl from Sweden. Emphasizing that she is 'just' a schoolgirl from Sweden, she is making herself small and even more 'insignificant'. This would probably have been impactful if she said, 'a schoolgirl from Sweden' as well, but using the word 'just' shows that she is aware that she is a 'nobody'. This also demonstrates that everyone can make a change, however small they might be, and wherever they are from. She does not say that they are experts, she agrees with the criticism of them being 'just children'. She points out that she is different. She is not a 'trained' politician, media personality or a particularly exciting speaker. By sometimes stopping up during her speeches to read again since she said a word wrong (see e.g. FridaysForFuture, 2019c), having trouble with her microphone, dressing in oversized hoodies, having a practical hair due, showing emotions, reminding us that she is a child, not wanting the focus on her but the cause are demonstrates that she is not a trained media personality which strengthens her authenticity. She genuinely cares about the cause.

## 6.0. Discussion – never too small to make a difference

For over three decades, the message from many climate scientists and activists has been the same: we must do what we can to stop climate change. Even though global reports, goals and agreements might seem like a step in the right direction, they are not fulfilled in time. The climate science is getting better, and yet, it seems like people are becoming less worried. If the science is clear, can it be that the communication does not work?

In this thesis, Thunberg's speeches were analysed to identify how she frames the climate crisis. Her ability to mobilize has been remarkable and has engaged millions. It seems like Thunberg has succeeded where many has failed before. This research can contribute to understand Thunberg's message and appeal, and provide knowledge on ways to communicate climate changes in general. Both to understand the case of Thunberg and to be able to use this information in climate communication. The generalization might be limited, since she is young and uses this in her argumentation. It might not be as successful if she was a 50-year-old man for instance. However, we can still use the knowledge provided in this thesis as tools in climate communication. The climate crisis will get worse, and it does not seem like the global actions necessary are being prioritized. Knowledge on climate communication will therefore be increasingly more important. Her pragmatic intent is to get the leaders to act according to the Paris Agreement. However, the different frames enlighten this message in different ways. How she frames the climate crisis, who she is, and the power of the movement are important for her overall success.

### Moral prophet frame

Within the moral prophet frame she is making moral evaluations of what is right and wrong. She is trying to convince people of who has the responsibility, create a common understanding of the situation, how we should think and feel about it and defines what we should do. The most important issue is the climate crisis we are facing, and that we must create a broad public awareness. She focuses on equity, criticizes capitalism and the market, and therefore criticizes the fossil fuels forever imaginary and the techno-market imaginary. The moral prophet frame is more in line with both the climate apocalypse imaginary by saying that this is a crisis and that we should panic, and the sustainable lifestyle imaginary by saying that the focus on money and luxury is causing destruction. We must move away from capitalism and consumerism. She believes that if people are aware, they will make sustainable choices, referring to the sustainable lifestyle imaginary. She is trying to get complete authority over what is morally acceptable.

Focusing on values can have a bigger effect than focusing on the possibility of green technology or that it is more economically profitable. Promoting inner motivated values such as empathy, community, and equity can have a long-term effect. It builds upon the feeling that we are working towards a mutual, and not only individual, goal. She wants the people to speak up and show their discontent at the leaders to get the leaders to act, change the system and create broad public awareness.

#### Generational justice frame

In the generational justice frame she says that the leaders are stealing the future from the young generation. The children are the victims, and the older generation, specifically the leaders, are the bad guys. She is making the issue closer to the audience by referring to their own children and grandchildren, and that they must do what they can to look their children in their eyes. She makes it closer to young people's lives since she is communicating the concerns of a young generation and is defining them as the victims of the situation. It is not only about polar bears far away in time and space. It is regarding everyone's future, and they must act now to still have a chance of a prosperous future. She is not only defining it as a generational issue, but she is also a part of the generation that has been betrayed, which makes her more relatable. The school children are doing what they can and will never stop fighting. They cannot vote yet, but they can be heard. This can make it more interesting to engage with Fridays For Future, since this is a way that they can be heard. She has given them the tools to show their discontent.

#### Power shift frame

In the power shift frame she is shifting the power. She is a child, telling the leaders that they are acting like immature, irresponsible children. They do not understand the situation and have not done their homework. These are all phrases normally associated with adults speaking to children, not the other way around. This gets more impactful when she is a child herself, saying this to adults with great political power. She wants a complete system change where the carbon budget should be included in every decision. She gives hope by showing that no one is too small to make a difference, since she was heard even though she is a 'nobody'. Even though she claims that the leaders, party politics and media has failed, she says that the people have not failed. They are speaking up and do not accept the leader's behaviour. The young ones will be watching the leaders and hold them accountable. Speaking of a total system shift, she wants us to go in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle imaginary.

### Empty rhetoric frame

In the empty rhetoric frame she claims that nothing is being done. The leaders are setting up vague goals and pretend that they are doing enough. This is calming the public down, since they believe that the leaders are doing what needs to be done. There are no grey areas when it comes to survival, so we must speak in black and white. This is necessary to get people to wake up and take this seriously. She introduces the term ‘cathedral thinking’. Even though there are some uncertainties, we must try even though we might not know how to build the ceiling. Even though she often says that it is very simple, she presents complex definitions of what sustainability is, focuses on equity, says that there is no ‘one fits all’-solution and acknowledges that this process of change will be hard and complex.

### Scientific frame

The four previous frames are about values and what is right and wrong in Thunberg’s eyes. In the scientific frame she is presenting the science behind her arguments, and that they should listen to the scientists instead of listening to her. She does not claim that she has all the answer and makes herself replaceable and therefore vulnerable. Many have used this scientific frame before, and she is not saying anything new. But the combination with the other frames and who she is makes her message more powerful and unique. It gives the other arguments more depth and she is legitimizing her arguments by authorization. By combining science and moral, the moral aspect gets more strength since she shows that she knows of the best available science.

### Barriers

She is making climate change closer by connecting this to the audience by talking about their children, that this is happening now, and that it will affect everyone. This makes it closer in time and space and goes against the distance barrier. She is contributing to the doom barrier when speaking of an awaiting catastrophe and the end of our civilization. She does say that we still have time and that this is not hopeless. She is criticising them for using the dissonance barrier when they are not acting according to what they know, and that they are pretending that they are doing enough and are choosing to fail. She also says that people are not acting sustainably since they are not aware of the consequences. She is using shame, which might make it harder to doubt or trivialize what they know so that they can feel better, since she says that they cannot look their children in their eyes if they do not do what is necessary. She is speaking against the leaders and the fossil fuels industry, and those have been known for being a part of the fossil fuels forever imaginary. Some might use the denial barrier by ignoring or passively avoid acknowledging climate science to protect themselves against fear and guilt.

A taken for granted truth is that we should trust science. She might make climate change harder to ignore by showing the attention the cause has gotten through the strikes. The moral evaluations might trigger people's identity barrier since she is criticising people's lifestyle and their focus on luxury and consumption. However, she is not specific in her critique of people's lifestyle. People might try to defend themselves and filter out information that does not align with their identity. She demands that we change but does not blame the people. She blames the leaders and the media for not creating a broad public awareness and continuing a system that causes destructions and sufferings. If she only focused on the individualized aspect of climate change, the identity barrier might be easier to use for many people since this will be a form of critique of their life choices. When she criticises the system, it does not seem to affect our identity as much.

#### Charismatic leader

She is a young girl who speaks on behalf of her own generation. She does not get financial benefits, nor does she have another agenda. This strengthens her moral integrity and her message. The signal she sends by being heard, might be the biggest strength. She gives hope by being heard. Climate change can seem abstract and intangible, and people might think that they are an insignificant person on this earth. But so was she. Her success might be rooted in what she is saying, the way she is framing and legitimizing it, who she is and the fact that she is being heard. She is a part of the message. She is trying to create a new definition of the situation, change the system and get total authority over what is acceptable actions in the climate crisis. She does not do what is expected of a leader in the political arena and points out that her being different is a strength. She is an unconventional leader who breaks the rules and tells the leaders that they are not good enough which contributes to her charismatic appeal. She changed what we can expect and what is possible. She redefines what expectations we should have to the leaders and redefines which values we should have regarding the climate crisis. She tries to change the beliefs in the imaginaries that have allowed the leaders to go on like before and legitimized their (in)actions. Their actions are being legitimized since 'everyone' are doing it and there has not been someone to hold them accountable. For example, there are no penalties or sanctions for the countries who does not fulfil the goals of the Paris Agreement, which has also been the case for other agreements and goals. She has created a watchdog in the movement. She is saying that the strikers will watch the leaders, that the young generations eyes are upon them and they will not forgive the leaders if they fail. They will hold the leaders accountable for their failures even if there are no official or legal penalties or sanctions for not reaching their commitments.

She is in a unique position since she is a child. She does not get involved with the solution. However, she does put pressure on the leaders, which can be the solution if the problem is their inactions. She is a spokesperson we can relate to, and engage in. She is taking on the fight against powerful leaders and a system, which can make people root for her. Her type of appeal and charisma have contributed to the mobilizing of people across the globe. Understanding these collective and revolutionary forces can be a field where environmental sociology can contribute.

### Greta the tipping point

Thunberg often speaks of tipping points regarding the climate crisis. I would argue that she has been a tipping point. Once she started out, became known, heard, and gained many followers, it is harder for people to look away. Maybe we will speak of the time ‘before and after Greta Thunberg’. Before Thunberg, leaders could get away with not acting according to the Paris Agreement, because people were not aware or did not feel like they could do anything about it. After Thunberg, people realized that they have power. They can hold the leaders accountable and let them know of their discontent. Maybe she has started an irreversible chain reaction *within people’s control*, but *beyond the leader’s control*. If this is the all-inclusive cultural movement needed to weaken and dissolve the resistance to climate science is yet to be seen. As of now, there has not been many political changes. We could see this at the COP25 in Madrid which did not really lead to anything of great importance, and it does not seem like the Paris Agreement will be reached in time. Just like the many other agreements over the last decades. If we will see a complete shift when the participants are old enough to vote remains to be seen. What has changed, is that people are speaking up.

As in the story of the hummingbird, the action of the bird is powerful because it is a little and powerless creature. Even though it cannot put out the fire by itself, it is doing what it can. The story would not have had the same impact if it were an elephant that tried to put out a tiny fire. It might seem like it is the same with Greta Thunberg. When more powerful people before her tried to put the focus on climate change, it did not have the same impact. Off course, this might have been due to a lot of factors, but the factor of who she is, is important. ‘Just a schoolgirl’ without much political power. She is taking on the fight against leaders, economic structures, and political systems on a global scale. And who knows, maybe a swarm of hummingbirds will be enough to stop the fires? Will the small hummingbirds make it harder for the bigger animals to stand there doing nothing?



### Limitations of the study

This study can only make assumptions of Thunberg's aims and intents. It would have been more accurate if it did include interviews with her, or an ethnographic study of her during this time. This was simply not possible. Using different hearings, interviews, her social media, and all available material could also strengthen the findings in this thesis or give additional conclusions. Studying her for an even longer period than one year could also give more information on her development as time goes by. This would however demand more time and pages than what this master thesis would allow.

### 6.1. Outlook

There are many aspects that could be interesting. Doing a more thoroughly rhetorical analysis, analyse how people perceive her, which frames are appealing to who, if youths feel ownership to the cause and the power of the movement. It would be interesting to study the movement and the process of mobilization. What is also important to look at to get a complex picture of Thunberg and Fridays For Future, is to look at if she has made people more environmentally friendly, or if they would have been regardless of her. Is she a voice that has inspired a movement to become more climate friendly, or is she the voice that gathered the ones already interested? It would also be interesting to do a comparative analysis of Thunberg and other climate activists. Why is she successful in comparison with others?

She has said that she will go back to school in the fall of 2020. It would be interesting to see how this will affect the movement. During the spring of 2020, she published updates on other topics, not just climate. She donated money to UNICEF, and she re-posted tweets on police violence on African Americans in the US. Is she now becoming a voice to other causes as well? How will this affect her message and credibility on climate change?

It would also be interesting to see how the corona pandemic has changed people willingness to change. Maybe this will make people more aware that this is in fact a small world. The will to change radically and rapidly, and the sudden will to use billions on crisis-packages makes me hopeful. When people see the need, they act.

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